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NATIONALISM AND THE  
COMMUNAL MIND



*By the same Author*

COMMON SENSE AND ITS  
CULTIVATION

*(Second Impression)*

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# NATIONALISM AND THE COMMUNAL MIND

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book contains an attempt to discover the nature of nationalism.

No argument is needed to convince my readers that, at the present time, national feeling appears to be increasing in strength throughout the world. No one will deny that this development brings with it an ever-increasing risk of war. It seems also that statesmen have so little confidence in any remedies they may have against this risk that on all sides they are adding to their expenditure on armaments.

No serious attempt has hitherto been made to discover the nature of national feeling. Those who have thought about it appear to have contented themselves with explanations made up out of their heads on the spur of the moment. The subject is one that deserves more serious treatment. Sometimes blame for the ill effects of national feeling is put on the hypothetical "cave man within us." This may well be the case, but, as it stands, it is a very vague conception. The phrase implies that certain activities of our cave-man ancestors had effects on their minds that have been transmitted to their descendants otherwise than by means of tradition or suggestion. Motives for conduct thus coming from the past are usually known as "instincts." Probably there is something of an instinctive nature in love of one's country and also in the tendency to be loyal to one's

comrades in an enterprise, whether this enterprise is a private business or the affairs of the nation. But national feeling is of a different nature. Unlike an instinct, it may remain latent for centuries, and suddenly, on an appropriate stimulus, burst into full activity. Differing from what happens with an instinct, the suggestion that arouses it, often and perhaps usually, is restricted in its incidence. While some individuals are unaffected, others are led by it to frenzied conduct in which they may show complete disregard for the safety of their lives or of their property.

The suddenness with which an outburst of national feeling may arise when a threat is made against the security or dignity of the nation, and also the intensity of this outburst, both furnish proofs that the part played by suggestion in an explosion of national feeling is that of the trigger rather than that of the powder. We shall find abundant proofs that this latter is something that, in an obscure way, comes to us from the past.

A peculiar characteristic of national feeling that furnishes a clue to its nature is the fact that it may remain latent for centuries and then burst out into full activity. Analogues for such a phenomenon are met with in a group of persistent customs that were once prevalent among our ancestors and that to-day survive among many of the lower races of mankind. These customs are mostly of a more or less brutal nature. They appear to have originated among our human ancestors at a comparatively late stage in their evolution. We shall find reasons for asserting that they are maintained for the most part by impulses coming from the past; yet

these impulses differ from instincts in many important respects. As an example we may quote the blood-feud impulse. Sporadic instances of its occurrence are not infrequently reported in the newspapers of countries in which this custom has otherwise been extinct for centuries. The impulses by which such customs are perpetuated resemble in many ways the impulses concerned in national feeling. Thus the knowledge of these customs that we owe to the labour of anthropologists acquires an unexpected importance in throwing a light on the nature of our political feelings.

That national feeling is not yet understood is well illustrated by the following facts.

In October, 1936, Mussolini, in one of his vigorous speeches, said that "while the Mediterranean is a route for Great Britain, it is Italy's very life." He demanded that the right of Italy to use the Mediterranean should be respected. He spoke on this point with some excitement, as if there were a conflict as to the right to use this highway. English papers were puzzled by this speech. They pointed out that no one wanted to interfere with Italy's right to use the Mediterranean, and one of them bluntly asked what reason there could be for Mussolini's "hysterical outburst." Mussolini is a man of outstanding ability, and it is a very serious matter that he should deliberately deliver a speech that can be so described. It is also a serious fact that Italy's aircraft factories were then working overtime, and her naval dockyards were producing a fleet of enormous strength. It is impossible not to associate these facts with Mussolini's speech. That the main purpose of these armaments is the defence

of Italy's rights to use the Mediterranean is also indicated by a speech made by Signor Biago Pace at the same congress as Mussolini's. It was to the effect that in the past Italy had relied on common action with Great Britain, but the security she had felt because two of the Mediterranean gates were in British hands had failed her. "Should England persist," he said, "in her monopolistic conception the final solution would come only from the shaking off of the Mediterranean servitude of Italy through a war. This might be a war in which Italy would give Great Britain her help, obtaining in exchange the Mediterranean position to which she aspired, or a victorious war against Britain, or a war against Britain by a group of Powers led by Italy." It is a mistake to dismiss such ideas as foolish. The trouble is that they are potent in developing a desire for war. They may appear foolish to us, but probably not more so than do Mr. Eden's ideas to Signor Biago Pace. Mr. Eden, in replying to Signor Mussolini, made a speech very similar to his. Each of these two speakers stressed the importance to their nation of freedom of passage through the Mediterranean; each of them stated that there was no wish to interfere with the passage of the other's ships; each asserted that they desired better relations between their two countries. With so much in common, why is it that on one side the opinions had to be expressed with "hysterical" vigour, while the other side is puzzled that any such vigour should be found to be necessary? The answer to this question is the influence of national feeling. The conclusions to which we are led in this book as to the nature of this feeling make it probable that the chief

reason for its intrusion on the present occasion is as follows.

National self-respect is, and must be, the aim of every civilized government. National self-respect demands a feeling of national security—in other words, a sense of secure possession of the land belonging to one's nation. When Italy consisted of Italy alone, she had that feeling. Now that the Italian Empire consists of Italy plus Abyssinia, the latter being separated from Italy by a track that includes the Suez Canal, the position is different. The Canal can easily be blocked by the action of another Power. Till this is rectified there can be no feeling by Italy of secure possession of her territories. We shall see that this is so owing to the nature of national feeling. We shall find that its nature is such that no promises or pacts can supply the sense of security that it demands. We shall likewise see that nationalism, when thus balked of its aim, usually, if not always, arouses the desire for war. It is only with the help of knowledge of the nature of nationalism—a knowledge not yet possessed by politicians—that they can hope to be able to dispel such risk of war as is involved in the present condition of affairs.

A similar need for more knowledge exists in connection with the desire of Germany to regain her colonies. It may be doubted whether they had been possessed by Germany for so long a time that Germans had come to regard them as part of their national territory. If they had not, her desire to regain them cannot be due to national feeling, in the sense in which this term is used in this book. But her desire to possess these colonies may be



powerfully stimulated if national feeling is deliberately employed for this end by her Government. What is the feeling that can be thus evoked? Is it merely a temporary product capable of being aroused and again assuaged by an obedient press? Or is it a bias so impervious to reason and so ready to call for war if balked in its aim that, if once awakened, it could be satisfied only by actual war to gain its ends? Another practical point is whether, if awakened, it could be quietened, though perhaps not satisfied, by a partial satisfaction of Germany's demands? Facts described in this book go some way towards enabling one to form an opinion on each of these points.

In a letter to the *Times* (April 22, 1937), advocating the return to Germany of her colonies, the writer insists that, in compensation, Germany must make some concessions or give assurances as to her future conduct. This assertion is open to criticism. Friendly relations with Germany can scarcely be hoped for if the Allies will only do what Germany considers right in return for something that Germany would naturally regard as being in the nature of a bribe. Any suggested concessions or assurances that appear harmless to us might appear very different to a nation whose national feeling has been aroused. This would certainly be the case with assurances capable of being construed, even if only by far-fetched arguing, into a restriction of Germany's sovereignty or right to defend her interests. As the reader will appreciate from what is written in this book, any such assurances, demanded in ignorance of the nature of national feeling, are likely to do more harm than good. On the other hand, the mentality that underlies national feeling is well aware of

what is meant by the spoils of war, and consequently is not likely to lead to objections to paying compensation to individuals who might suffer pecuniary loss from the proposed change.

Knowledge of the nature of national feeling promises to have other advantages. At present politicians have no idea of the relation between the form of national feeling that leads to national self-respect and the form of national feeling that leads to thoughts of war and demands for exaggerated armaments. At present statesmen too often employ measures that are likely to engender this latter form of national feeling, instead of the former at which they think they are aiming.

Hitherto, in the absence of knowledge of the nature of nationalism, all suggestions made by politicians for allaying it need to be qualified by the word "if." Mr. Lloyd George has told us that nations must renounce war "not merely on a scroll of paper, but in the hearts of man." Such a remedy for present discontents would be admirable "if" it were possible. Mr. Eden has told us that "war mentality" must be laid aside. Nothing else would be needed "if" this could be done. According to Mr. Cordell Hull, American Secretary of State, nations must join together "on a basis of friendliness and co-operation," and "if" this happens, they can achieve "an enduring peace." Here the "if" is mentioned but needs to be underlined. An address by a high ecclesiastical dignitary heard on the Radio recently was to the effect that the trouble in Europe is due to men being bad; the remedy he proposed was that men should be good. He forgot the "if."

The conclusion arrived at in this book is that men are "bad" in the sense of the word as used by this ecclesiastical dignitary, and that they will remain bad despite any preaching or persuasion. Nevertheless we shall find that comprehension of the nature of this "badness" promises, so far as civilized races are concerned, to put statesmen in a position to save us from its ill effects while retaining the advantages that must come from proper regard for national self-respect and national dignity.

Our political feelings are not, as a rule, confined to single individuals; they commonly affect the whole community or a large part of it. An attempt is therefore made in the last two chapters to see whether any grounds can be found for ascribing them to a "communal mind," and whether also there is any justification for such terms as "racial memory," "racial intelligence," and "herd instinct."

E. HANBURY HANKIN

# CONTENTS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PREFACE . . . . .  | V    |
| CHAP. I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .  | I    |
| II. THE SOURCE OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS . . . . .                                       | 12   |
| III. PERSISTENT CUSTOMS RELATING TO BLOOD . . . . .                                  | 27   |
| IV. CANNIBALISM IN EUROPE . . . . .  | 42   |
| V. FRENZIED FIGHTING AND HEAD-HUNTING . . . . .                                      | 62   |
| VI. THE TREATMENT OF THE VANQUISHED IN WAR . . . . .                                 | 77   |
| VII. HUMAN SACRIFICE IN EUROPE . . . . .   | 87   |
| VIII. THE RITES OF DIONYSUS . . . . .  | 105  |
| IX. THE KING-KILLING CUSTOM . . . . .  | 117  |
| X. PERSISTENT MODES OF THOUGHT AND NATIONAL<br>SELF-RESPECT . . . . .                | 126  |
| XI. NATIONALISM AS A PERSISTENT MODE OF<br>THOUGHT . . . . .                         | 140  |
| XII. NATIONAL DIGNITY . . . . .  | 154  |
| XIII. IS LOSS OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS CONNECTED<br>WITH RACIAL DEGENERATION? . . . . . | 170  |
| XIV. ANALOGUES OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS IN<br>ANIMALS . . . . .                         | 1    |
| XV. THE COMMUNAL MIND . . . . .  |      |
| INDEX . . . . .  |      |



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| P |  | PAGE |
|---|--|------|
|   | DISTRIBUTION OF THE CUSTOM OF DRINKING ENEMY |      |
|   | BLOOD . . . . .                              | 35   |
|   | RECORDS OF CANNIBALISM IN EUROPE. . . .      | 51   |
|   | RECORDS OF HEAD-HUNTING AND USE OF SKULLS AS |      |
|   | DRINKING CUPS IN EUROPE . . . . .            | 70   |
|   | RECORDS OF HUMAN SACRIFICE IN EUROPE. . .    | 95   |
|   | VARIATIONS IN PUNISHMENT FOR THEFT . . .     | 131  |



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

It has been explained in the Preface that the clue to the nature of nationalism is to be found in the study of a group of persistent customs and modes of thought to which a large part of the human race is or has been addicted. This study occupies the first nine chapters. Readers who might find the details of this study irksome are advised, after finishing this chapter, to go on to Chapter X, where a summary will be found of the conclusions to which we are led.

The customs in question have originated within the human period of our ancestry. They have lasted through long periods of time with but little change, but yet have been progressively losing their hold throughout the historical period. This loss of hold has gone further with the more advanced than it has with the less advanced races of mankind.

Sometimes the custom has gradually fallen out of use with little or no antecedent change. Examples of this happening among more advanced races are offered by tattooing and also by the blood-feud. In many other instances, while its power is waning, the custom has been replaced by an ameliorated form less brutal than its original. Sometimes also a persistent custom or a persistent mode of thought has been retained for a time with but little change, while the emotion that used to accompany it has been replaced by an emotion or by a mode of thought of an exactly opposite nature. Such curious variants may be described as "counterparts."

The different forms of national feeling are also liable to



be replaced by contradictory or counterpart modes of thought. Nothing exactly like this occurs with instincts. For example, with some individuals the bias of patriotism may be replaced by what Herbert Spencer has called the bias of anti-patriotism. The feeling of imperialism that demands an extension of the nation's territory may be replaced by the feeling of anti-imperialism that would restrict it. Loyalty to one's government may be replaced by its opposite, as instanced by the traitor of mediæval times who embarked on his scheme with negligible chances of success and the prospect of most unpleasant consequences for himself when discovered. The occurrence of such counterparts seems definitely to exclude the idea that national feeling, in its different forms, can be solely due either to instincts or to combinations of instincts. Some hitherto unrecognized mode of action of the mind must be involved.

The occurrence of these political counterparts affords a further reason for expecting that we may learn something of the nature of national feeling by the study of persistent customs and their variants.

The following is a list of such customs with their modified forms and counterparts.

(1) Blood-drinking customs :

- a. Drinking enemy blood as a gesture of hatred ;
- b. Drinking the blood of a near relation when in a paroxysm of grief at his death ;
- c. Mutual tasting of each other's blood by parties to a treaty and in blood brotherhood ceremonies.

(2) Customs involving cannibalism :

- a. Eating of enemies as a gesture of hatred ;
- b. Eating the flesh of a friend when in a paroxysm of grief at his loss ;
- c. Eating a substitute for the flesh of the deceased at the funeral feast.

- (3) Customs involving restricted cannibalism :
  - a. Eating or gnawing or biting the heart of an enemy ;  
and also cutting it out without biting it, as a gesture of hatred ;
  - b. Eating the heart of an enemy to acquire his courage, etc. ;
  - c. Keeping the heart of a great man apparently as a tribute of respect.
- (4) Customs connected with skulls :
  - a. Making a drinking cup from the skull of an enemy as a gesture of hatred ;
  - b. Drinking from the skull of a saint to get a blessing or to cure a disease.
- (5) Customs involving mutilation of teeth :
  - a. Filing the front teeth to points of a kind likely to add to their efficiency in biting enemies ;
  - b. Filing the front teeth to points too fragile for them to be of practical use, or making notches or grooves in these teeth or inlaying them with brass wire ;
  - c. Removing some or all of the front teeth.
- (6) Customs relating to strangers :
  - a. Race prejudice and hatred of strangers ;
  - b. The desire to offer hospitality to strangers.
- (7) Customs relating to change of rulers :
  - a. The custom of killing the king after he has reigned for a term of years or when he shows loss of bodily strength ;
  - b. Ameliorated forms of this custom in which the death of the king or cruelty to him is avoided.
- (8) Human sacrifice :
  - a. Often and perhaps usually carried out with great cruelty amid scenes of frenzied excitement ;
  - b. Mock human sacrifices in which cruelty is avoided and usually taking the form of a popular festival.

A singular point about these customs is the fact that they are all apparently useless, despite the fact that the strongest emotions must have been concerned in their origin. In the next chapter reasons will be given for suspecting that primitive man was nearly or quite innocent of them, and that they either originated or only became widespread at a comparatively recent stage in our ancestry.

At first glance it seems reasonable to suppose that each of these customs is maintained owing to tradition and the desire to follow established usage. Were this true the study of these customs would have but little interest or importance; but there are many facts that militate against any such simple explanation. We shall come across reasons for asserting that each of these customs is maintained by an impulse that resembles an instinct in certain respects. It is not a product of reasoning by the individual; it comes from the past; it may give rise to frenzied conduct as great as or even more than that ever produced by recognized instincts. The impulse differs from an instinct in that it is useless; it has been waning throughout the historical period, and it may affect only a small portion of the members of a community. Thus it appears highly improbable that the impulse, though coming from the past, is inherited in the same way as are recognized instincts. It will be necessary to undertake a detailed study of the persistent customs both to substantiate the above assertions and also to enable us to estimate the value of any suggestions that may be made as to the means by which these customs are maintained.

In several instances the observance of the custom is accompanied by intense frenzied excitement. No amount of suggestion or respect for tradition or desire to carry out prescribed ceremonies offers a satisfying explanation of such mental effects. Suggestion in such cases will be

shown to act as a trigger liberating a store of latent energy. No suggestion, for example, can explain the frenzied disgust we should feel if we heard of a man marrying his own daughter, or the even stronger disgust felt in many of the lower races by the marriage of cousins. Such feelings are not due to the teachings of a schoolmaster or to the dogma of a priest; they come from the past. The problem of how this happens is, as we shall see, one of the greatest psychological interest and importance.

Reasons or excuses are often given for following these customs. Such excuses are usually of a trivial nature and of a kind that could not possibly be a source of the practices in question. The variety of these excuses affords a valid reason, in several cases, for disbelieving them. For instance, it has been suggested that cannibalism as a custom began in different places for different reasons.\* This view implies that an individual, A, who had never heard of cannibalism, discovered that eating his victim would act as a tonic; that another, B, an individual also ignorant of cannibalism, ate someone as a tribute of respect; and that yet another, C, who was equally ignorant of cannibalism, devoured an enemy in order to lay his ghost. It is very difficult to believe that A, B, and C, men belonging to different races, having different religious and social codes, all dropped by chance on one and the same panacea as the solution of their various problems.

Another reason for refusing to accept current excuses for various barbarous customs is that such excuses seem often to ascribe incredible ingenuity to some prehistoric theologian and also an amazing power of persuading his neighbours to accept his somewhat unpleasant conclusions. The king-killing custom is a case in point. The Shilluk, a tribe living on the White Nile, kill their king

\* *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 555.

as soon as he shows signs of being enfeebled by age. They say that if they did not do so there would be heavy mortality among men and cattle and also failure of their crops. Frazer's explanation of this belief is that it is a result of the doctrine that kings are incarnations of a god. An enfeeblement of the king would therefore impair his divine powers.\* This view may be held by the tribe nowadays, but that it was also held when the custom originated is very difficult to believe. A medicine-man who preached the killing of the king in a country where the practice had never been heard of would be far more likely to lose his head than to make converts.

Yet another reason for regarding such excuses with distrust is their triviality in cases in which strong passions must have accompanied the origin of the customs. For instance, some feeling stronger than æsthetic considerations must have been involved in the origin of the custom of forcible removal of the front teeth. The desire to be different from their dogs is the unsatisfying excuse given by the Eskimos of Mackenzie River for filing their front teeth down to the level of the gums. In Africa the Batoka and the Bababya tribes mutilate their front teeth, and say that they do so in order to be like their cattle.

The paradoxical counterparts afford very strong grounds for doubting whether persistent customs are maintained by respect for tradition, for each counterpart as it arose did so in plain disregard of, and contradiction to, tradition. Let us now consider these customs.

A few instances are recorded in Irish history of women, when in a paroxysm of grief, drinking the blood of a husband or son who had just been killed. Similar occurrences are recorded in Scotland, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The drinking, or the wish to drink, the blood of a loved one is mentioned in Gaelic poems in such phrases as "Thy red blood more

\* *The Dying God*, p. 14.

sweet to me than wine," or "Not of the rich red wine of Spain, the blood of thy body, love, would I prefer." \*

There is no evidence that any benefit was supposed to be obtained by drinking the blood; it was simply a frenzied desire to drink the blood of a loved one, a desire that does not appear to have been a product of any reasoning process in the individual. It is a desire that came from the past and that must have originated within the human period of our ancestry. We are subject to other feelings that deserve the same description; for instance, our disgust at the idea of eating the flesh of relations and the frenzied disgust felt in some existing races at the idea of incest.

In one of the poems quoted above, the authoress, in asserting her wish to drink the blood of her fiancé who had been drowned when on his way to the wedding, says, "Gainsay it who would," thereby indicating that she was aware that her neighbours might disapprove of this way of showing her grief. The few instances quoted may therefore be merely sporadic reappearances of a long-extinct custom.

This custom of drinking the blood of a friend as a gesture of affection may be the source of the widespread custom of tasting the blood of a friend or acquaintance in blood-brotherhood ceremonies both in Europe and in other countries. In old times also the custom existed of parties to a treaty tasting each other's blood.

The next counterpart custom to consider is that of eating the flesh of friends or relations. Just as with drinking the blood of friends, it may occur in two forms: it may be a routine part of the funeral ceremonies, or it may be an expression of frenzied grief. In one instance, reported from California, while the body was being burnt, one of the spectators, overcome by a paroxysm of grief,

\* Details of these instances of blood-drinking as an expression of grief will be found in Chapter III.

rushed to the pyre and tore off a piece of the flesh and ate it. For a similar reason, among the Botocudos, mothers may eat the flesh of their children. In Hawaii a dead chief may be eaten as a mark of particular affection.\*

It is noteworthy that in these instances also no evidence is available that the desire to eat the flesh of the deceased was due to any theological argument or superstition.

In countries in which cannibalism has long been extinct, the eating, at the funeral feast, of something that represents the flesh of the deceased is a common occurrence. Hartland, who has made an extensive study of the subject, devotes no less than four pages of his book to survivals of the funeral feast that exist or have existed till recently in Great Britain.† In various parts of England and Wales special cakes are given to the guests at the funeral. In some parts of Albania such cakes are in the human form. These cakes may be passed across the coffin, as in Shropshire and Wales. Or, as in some places in Wales, the funeral food before being eaten may be placed on a dish of salt on the corpse.

Instances are known of eating the heart of an enemy as an expression of hatred. A counterpart to this custom has existed in Europe in the practice of taking out the heart of a king and warrior and burying it separately from his corpse. For example, the hearts of emperors of Austria, during the last two hundred years, have been preserved in a special chamber in the Church of the Augustin Friars in Vienna.

A revulsion of feeling similar to that involved in the counterpart customs may be the source of the extraordinary sympathy sometimes shown for condemned criminals. For example, during the eighteenth century in England inquisitive visitors were allowed to see

\* *The Legend of Perseus*, by E. S. Hartland, Vol. II, p. 286.

† *Ibid.*, (David Nutt, London, 1895), Vol. II, pp. 291-294.

condemned criminals before their execution. Instances are on record of society ladies crowding round a condemned man, shaking his hand, and asking for his autograph.\*

Further evidence of desires, coming from the past, serving as motives for conduct is yielded by the very numerous substitutes for human sacrifices that still exist throughout Europe, and that we will now consider.

These mock sacrifices seem to lack every quality or circumstance that has ever been asserted to be the reason for the original ceremony. The early gods are described as having an insatiable thirst for human blood. Usually none is offered in substitute ceremonies. Or the victim is supposed to be sent to the god as a messenger. The substitute could not perform this function. Or the death of the victim expiated a sin. How could this be done by an effigy of straw or paper?

That such ceremonies were not carried out with any idea of deceiving the god is proved by instances in which the sacrifice has nothing to do with any appeal to the deity. For example, the custom of sacrificing the widow on the death of her husband was once widely spread in Europe, Asia, and America. A substitute for this custom exists among the Tacullies in North America, where the widow is made to lie on the funeral pyre of her husband while it is being lit, but is allowed to creep away as soon as the heat is more than she can bear. This is an example of what is usual with these customs—namely, that as they lose their hold they are satisfied by some observance that is merely a parody of their original aim.

A human sacrifice on founding a building originally had the purpose of providing a guardian spirit. The difficulty of finding suitable human victims must have given reason for finding substitutes. So long as the purpose of the sacrifice was remembered, it must have been impossible

\* *Prisoner's Progress*, by S. G. Partridge (Hutchinson & Co., 1936), p. 180.



to do so. But when the purpose was forgotten, as seems to have happened everywhere, the employment of substitutes of all kinds became feasible. At first it was thought that a life was required. Hence there are records of sacrifice of a dog, a ram, or a cock, etc. In the next stage of forgetting, a relic of a living animal was enough. Hence a bone from a human corpse or the skull of an animal or even the bones of a wild bird were used. Each of these changes meant a departure from an established custom. The motive force was a desire that was satisfied by such trivial substitutes.

A proof that such substitutes do represent a human victim is yielded by instances in which either a representative of the human victim or an animal may be used in the same locality. For instance, in Greece and other countries of eastern Europe a measurement of a man's shadow may be buried under the foundation. It is supposed that the man whose shadow has been thus treated will die shortly afterwards. In Bulgaria if the builder cannot obtain a human shadow he will use a measurement of the shadow of the first animal that comes his way. In Greece the builder may either bury the shadow of a man or he may kill a cock, a ram, or a lamb and allow the blood to flow on to the foundation stone under which the animal is afterwards buried.\*

It is said that in Rome statues stolen from deserted or ruined buildings have been broken up and buried as foundation sacrifices.† So long as this custom existed, which presumably was not for long, it satisfied a desire for something recalling the original foundation sacrifice. This is a clear instance of substitution, for it is impossible to imagine that this practice could have been designed by anyone who had no knowledge of human foundation sacrifices.

\* *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, by Sir J. G. Frazer, p. 89.

† "A Building Superstition," by Coote, in *Folk Lore Journal*, Vol. I, p. 23.

An important feature of these mock sacrifices is the fact that they may persist long after the religion under whose auspices they were begun has been forgotten. Thus what is transmitted from one generation to the next is a desire. It is not a desire to please God. It is a desire to perform the substitute ceremony. It is a desire that has arisen from a degradation or amelioration of a previously existing desire for the real sacrifice. The desire for the mock sacrifice is not simply a wish to conform to custom, for it was a divergence from custom when it originated and, as it changes in the course of time, it is destined to cause other divergences from custom.

The part played by suggestion in the indulgence of the many desires that come to us from the past is well illustrated by the facts of the cannibal frenzy that is met with among the Red Indians of British Columbia. As will be described in detail in Chapter VIII, it originally consisted of mad outbreaks of excitement in which cannibals tore their victims to pieces with their teeth and nails. Dogs have sometimes been substituted for the human victims, and in one instance the frenzy is satisfied by tearing a dead salmon to pieces with the teeth. With one of these tribes the frenzy is liable to be aroused by particular words heard in a song. Such suggestion causes some persons to bite, in some it arouses a desire to be bitten, and in some it arouses a desire to see biting done by others. Thus suggestion arouses, but does not originate, the latent desire.

With one of these tribes the act of cannibalism is confined to the chief. In many parts of the world, as the impulse for cannibalism dies away, its indulgence is reserved for the priest or king.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOURCE OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS

#### 1. *The Mode of Origin of these Customs*

AN explanation is needed of the remarkable fact that so many, if not all, of the more brutal of the persistent customs have been gradually losing their hold during the historical period; either they may be followed by a decreasing proportion of the members of the community, or they may be gradually replaced by ceremonies or festivities in which few or no traces of cruelty are apparent, or they may completely vanish. Such persistent customs as human sacrifice, eating the flesh of enemies or drinking their blood, using enemy skulls as drinking-cups or mounting their heads on stakes, or torturing enemy prisoners, are all unknown in Europe of to-day, but were more or less widely prevalent in Europe of two thousand years ago. Such a change for the better has been going on in all parts of the world. It has been going on at an increased rate during the last few centuries. This fact gives ground for the suspicion that these customs are not deeply ingrained in our nature, but are a recent acquisition. It looks as if, in comparatively recent times, some unusual factor had intervened in the development of human society and caused an outburst of ferocity.

The argument that, since these customs are unknown among many of the lower and simpler races to-day, primitive man must have been innocent of them is of little value. So long as it was believed that man first came into existence at some comparatively recent date—let us say shortly before Aurignacian times—it was perhaps permissible to

suppose that the simpler races of to-day were really "primitive," and consequently to regard their customs and mental dispositions as evidence of the nature of primitive man. But we can now assert that any such argument is fallacious. Recent discoveries leave no room for doubt that it was many hundreds of thousands of years ago since our ancestors first acquired the status of *Homo sapiens*, and also that a period to be reckoned in millions of years must have elapsed since men of other species than our own first used wooden spears and implements of stone and employed fire for some purpose of which we are ignorant. During this vast period of time our ancestors must have experienced changes of environment of many kinds, as they wandered from their place of origin. Many occasions must have happened for dropping old customs and for acquiring new ones. Hence there can be no certainty that any customs followed by the simpler races of to-day were also followed by primitive man. The immunity of such races from human sacrifice and from cannibalism may be primitive. On the other hand, their immunity may be due to a degeneration of the impulses that underlie such practices. Many of these races may be described as peaceable because they lack the custom of war. The assertion has been made that they are peaceable as regards personal quarrels. This opinion can be maintained only if much easily available evidence is overlooked. Consequently the customs of such races afford no satisfactory evidence as to whether primitive man properly so called was free of brutal customs. Many instances are known of degeneration among the lower races.

A sounder argument in favour of the view that primitive man was innocent of any high degree of pugnacity or of the custom of hating and killing strangers is afforded by the world-wide distribution of the earliest forms of stone implements, a fact that affords a presumption of inter-

course between neighbouring tribes. The coming of the Bronze Age yields a proof of commercial intercourse over long distances, permitting trade in the copper and tin from which bronze is made. Such trade could scarcely have developed if stranger-hating was then as prevalent as it has been recently in many parts of the world.

It may seem wrong to use the term "degeneration" to describe the loss of brutal customs, because such change, from our point of view, is so obviously a change for the better; but this use of the term is correct, because it implies that something that used to be generated is now no longer generated, or is not generated to the same extent as before. If we say that anything is generated, we imply that it is innate or inherited. In a later chapter we shall describe an instance of complete loss of the instinct to resist aggression. Such a loss is properly described as a degeneration because an instinct is an innate feature of the mind. On the other hand, the loss of a habit, which is not an innate but an acquired character, would, if it is a bad habit, be more suitably described as an amelioration.

If we admit that it is probable that the persistent customs are of recent origin, it follows that we must seek their source in some circumstance that affected our ancestors at a comparatively recent stage of their evolution.

Let us consider whether this circumstance may be one of the results of the widening of the conception of property that must have taken place when men first began to grow crops and to keep herds of domestic animals. Previously when man was merely a hunter or food-gatherer, lacking as he did any food-storing instinct such as is possessed by the squirrel or the bee, his idea of personal property must have been confined to things he was using at the time or to something, such as a weapon, that he wanted because he had the habit of using it. But,

when the coming of crops and herds made him acquainted with the value of stores of food, he must have learnt to value property because it was property. The thrashing out of conventions as to ownership of property so desired is likely to have led to a period of furious fighting. Perhaps a relic of this period is to be found in the widespread use of the death penalty for theft among savage races. The idea of such an origin for this penalty is obviously plausible. On the other hand, the idea that the use of the death penalty is due to savage races in all parts of the world having a high moral code is too improbable to deserve any serious consideration \* (see Map, Fig. 5).

We have now to discuss the question whether not only war, but also the other customs we have been considering, may not have arisen as direct or indirect results of this phase of conflict as to the right of private property in its new form.

First let us consider a possible source of cannibalism and of the once world-wide custom of drinking the blood of enemies. Detailed evidence that these two customs once existed throughout Europe will be found in later chapters. Perhaps what my readers will regard as the most surprising part of this evidence is the list of no less than nine instances of cannibalism as a gesture of rage in different countries of Europe during the last few centuries. The fact that sporadic reappearances of cannibalism take the form of a gesture of rage agrees with the suggestion about to be made that this was the original form of the custom.

Our ancestors, when fighting about the possession of stored food, are likely to have done so in a state of frenzied rage, both owing to the vital necessity of conserving this food and also because, as is indicated by many facts, they were far more liable to strong emotions than are their descendants of to-day. The practice of biting their

\* For further discussion of the nature of the desire for property in man see Chapter X.

enemies, inherited from animal ancestors, when aggravated by such frenzy, may have led to tearing of enemy flesh and then to eating it and also to drinking their blood. A possible survival of such frenzied fighting is to be found in the widespread belief that a murderer or an executioner will go mad if he does not taste the blood of his victim. Detailed evidence of this belief will be found in a later chapter. The statements to this effect are so numerous that Frazer is of opinion that it is impossible to disregard them and that they afford evidence of an actual state of frenzy alleviated by such blood-tasting. Among the inhabitants of Celebes there is a definite name for this form of insanity. It is produced by the sight and even by the thought of human blood. This blood frenzy can be allayed only by tasting human blood or by drinking from an enemy skull.\* Less cogent evidence comes from other countries that a murderer may avoid some form of mental anxiety by tasting the flesh or liver of his victim.†

Though the use of the teeth as a weapon still persists with the Seri Indians of California and with one or two African tribes, in most cases, as individual combat developed into organized war, it became necessary to curb the practice of biting or eating enemies on the field of battle. That a temptation existed in Scandinavia to use the teeth in combat is suggested by a law of the Viking King Magnus to the effect that if anyone did so he was to have his teeth broken out of his mouth. The Berserker, if they felt their frenzy coming on without apparent cause, would relieve their feelings by gnashing their teeth. When advancing on the enemy they would bite their shields and then throw them away. Perhaps this biting was a substitute for biting the enemy.‡ It is possible,

\* *Psyche's Task*, p. 122.

† *The Jew and Human Sacrifice*, by H. L. Strack, p. 115, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 560.

‡ *The Viking Age*, by P. B. Du Chaillu (Murray, 1884), Vol. I, p. 549, and Vol. II, p. 432.

though the suggestion does not sound very probable, that the widespread practice of removing the front teeth in initiation ceremonies either began or came to be used as a hint to the young warrior to curb a natural inclination to bite his enemy. The custom of removing one or both of the central upper incisor teeth already existed in palæolithic times.\*

Another possible derivative of frenzied combat is shown by those races which, lacking an appetite for hand-to-hand fighting, obtain enemy heads by ambuscade, and the warriors of which bite these heads in scenes of frenzied excitement after returning to their homes. These raids take place after the crops have been planted, because that is the time when the men have leisure.† Perhaps this is the reason why in some instances head-hunting has acquired a connection with fertility rites.

Yet another relic of the phase of frenzied combat may be found in the widespread habit of ill-treatment of captured enemies. This habit appears to have been lacking in the earliest recorded wars, which were wars of extermination. Neither was it indulged in by the avenger of blood in blood-feuds, who was satisfied with killing his victim. Nor do head-hunters employ torture. Both in Asia and in South America it has been noticed that they use no further cruelty than what is involved in killing their victims. As organized war developed, it became more and more needful to check the habit of biting the slain or wounded enemy on the field of battle. An outlet was then needed for such frenzied cruelty to the enemy, and this was, it may be suggested, vented in safety on enemy prisoners after the battle was ended.

Torture of enemy prisoners appears to have been far more widely spread in the past than it is to-day. The

\* *Nature* for June 21, 1930, p. 935.

† *The Pagans of North Borneo*, by Owen Rutter (Hutchinson and Co., 1929).



practice may be the source of human sacrifice. No theories of human sacrifice yet put forward attempt to explain the horrible cruelty and the frenzied excitement with which this rite was frequently and perhaps usually carried out.\* Such frenzy is what one might expect if human sacrifice is originally derived from a practice of torturing enemy prisoners to death. The worship of the gods of the barbarian invaders of Europe consisted chiefly in putting enemy prisoners to death by cruel methods. Evidence is of the scantiest description that it had any other influence on conduct.† The astonishing ease with which this ancient creed succumbed to the attack of Christianity was probably in great part due to a growing dislike of the social evil of human sacrifice.

If appearances are not deceptive and if in reality the religion of the barbarian invaders had so little effect on their conduct at the time of their arrival in Europe, it does not follow that their religion had always been of this useless character. It may at first have acquired importance from its being used as a means of enforcing respect for private property. A reason for this suggestion is supplied by the remarkable hatred of religion that has been shown by those revolutionaries who have attacked the rights of private property in Europe. Another reason is the hatred of the heretic that, from the earliest known times, has been a widespread feature of religious belief.

## 2. *The Origin of the Counterpart Customs*

Certain facts afford a presumption that the counterpart customs began at a later date than their originals. The ceremony in which the king strikes a subject on the shoulder with a sword and says to him "Rise up, sir

\* For examples see Frazer's *The Scapegoat*, Ch. VII, and *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, p. 238.

† *A History of Europe*, by H. A. L. Fisher (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1935), Vol. I, p. 177.

knight " has outlasted, and certainly did not precede, using his sword to strike an enemy. The kindness to inferiors that we exercise in charity is a more recent acquisition of our mental outfit than unkindness to inferiors that results from snobbishness. The coming of the counterpart customs is a part, and perhaps a very large part, of the upward progress of humanity that has been going on during the historical period.

Our monkey ancestors used to show their teeth when angry. We do so when we are pleased, and we call this gesture a smile. The smile has been recognized among several species of monkeys. Darwin gives a picture of a monkey smiling. Its smile is said to resemble its gesture when angry so closely that " the two expressions can only be distinguished by those familiar with the animal." \* These two gestures, the smile and the snarl, are so much alike that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that some connection exists between them. The two gestures are not quite identical. It looks as if a frustrated snarl, being associated with frustrated enmity, came to denote pleasurable feelings and so to lead to the smile. But in such a change as in that from drinking enemy blood in a paroxysm of hate to drinking the blood of a friend in a paroxysm of grief, no recorded difference between the two gestures is known. All we can say is that, by some strange alchemy of the mind, there has been a revulsion of feeling. The cause of this is as yet beyond our comprehension. The word " revulsion " states a fact, but must not be mistaken for an explanation. The possibility that this revulsion is a consequence of any theological speculation appears to be excluded by the case of cannibalism. Here there has been a counterpart to a counterpart. The disgust that we feel at the idea of eating our relations and friends is so intense that it is difficult to realize that it

\* *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (2nd Ed. of 1904), p. 139.

needs an explanation. But this disgust is due to a revulsion from the custom of eating our relations as an expression of affection. An attempt to put down this latter custom may be the source of the strange custom of cremation. The custom of eating relations probably came as a revulsion from a former custom of eating the bodies of enemies on the field of battle. These different feelings of disgust connected with cannibalism are far too strong for it to be possible to explain them as due either to suggestion or tradition. Their intensity appears to exclude the possibility that they are due to any process of reasoning in the individual.

Striking evidence of the difficulty that exists in explaining how such feelings come to us from the past is yielded by an examination of records of cannibalism in Europe in comparatively recent times. Details of these records will be found in Chapter IV. Here it will suffice to say that a few instances are known in which the flesh of the victim was tasted by a murderer owing to a superstitious belief that he could thereby allay mental anxiety. All the remaining instances of European cannibalism during the last few centuries have been biting or tasting human flesh as a gesture of hatred. These instances afford some support to the suggestion that cannibalism arose as a consequence of the use of teeth in biting and tearing the flesh of an enemy. But it is the theoretical interest of these instances that deserves our attention.

How did the idea of eating part of an enemy arise in these cases in modern Europe, where cannibalism as a custom has been extinct for so long a time? How did it happen that hatred was indulged by so doing? In Scandinavian mythology there is mention of eating the heart of an enemy. It would be difficult seriously to maintain that biting the heart of an enemy by a French buccaneer in 1650 or by Sicilian soldiers in 1849 was due to their having studied Scandinavian legends. It is

difficult also to believe that memory of such an insult to the dead has persisted as tradition through many centuries, though so little used, and that this memory was sufficient to prompt the individual concerned to such unusual and repulsive conduct. How also could such memory result in hatred being indulged by such action? There seems therefore to be no room for doubt that in this strange conduct we are dealing with an influence from the past. The means by which it is transmitted to us will be discussed in a later chapter.

A further difficulty in the way of believing that sporadic instances of cannibalism are due either to tradition or to ordinary inheritance, lies in the fact that our minds may apparently retain vestiges of more than one phase of the feelings towards cannibalism that our ancestors have experienced at different times. For example, a youth who had come to England from somewhere in Central Europe was heard by me to say to a very beautiful girl, "You look so nice; I should like to bite you!" But yet there is no room for doubt that had the girl been dead, the idea of eating or even of touching her corpse would have been repulsive to him. In Europe it frequently happens that a woman when fondling her child will playfully bite it and say, "You look so nice; I should like to eat you." That such a singular mixture of feelings is not confined to Europe is suggested by the following information that I owe to Miss Edridge, a lady whose childhood was spent in New Zealand. A lady living there in about the year 1870 had children to whom a Maori was devotedly attached. This Maori, judging from the elaborate tattoo marks on his face, was a man of position. He was specially fond of the baby of the family. Once the lady found him playing with this baby with a peculiar expression on his face, with his eyes bloodshot, and using such phrases as "I should so like to eat you," and "How nice you would taste." He used to call the child "piggy."

This nickname had an unpleasant implication, as in New Zealand, as elsewhere, there seems to be some association of ideas between eating pig and eating human flesh. The lady thought it advisable to interrupt the intercourse of this man with her family and also, for some time, to keep a careful watch over her children.

It may be suggested that such occurrences are due to vestiges of a desire connected with a revulsion from the original form of cannibalism. Other instances of what appear to be sporadic reappearances of vestiges of long-extinct persistent customs are known. The case of an American schoolgirl wanting to taste the blood of a friend will be described in Chapter III. An instance of tasting the skin of a murderer after it had been tanned, in England in the year 1828, will be mentioned in Chapter VI.

### *3. Other Views as to the Source of Persistent Customs*

If the above suggestion as to the source of persistent customs contradicted any established theory there might be good reason for distrusting it. But this is not the case. Usually anthropologists have been content to record the facts relating to ancient customs without offering suggestions as to their origin. But a theory that deserves criticism has been put forward relating to the custom of drinking enemy blood. It is supposed that early man, as a result of theological speculation, first came to the conclusion that mutual drinking of blood between friends would seal their friendship, that afterwards early man began to drink enemy blood in the hope of acquiring friendship with the ghost of the slain, and that this led to eating enemy flesh—apparently as a further hint to the ghost—and lastly, when we may suppose his theological speculations had been forgotten, he found out that drinking the blood of his foe added to the fullness of his revenge.

If we had any grounds whatever for believing that early man, in the heat of conflict, had and retained the mental

disposition of a pious saint, we might treat this theory with respect. We have no such ground. This theory seems to imply that, since man acquired his characteristic pugnacity, his progress has been downwards: that at first he had the mind of a modern theologian, but that at length he came to resemble an angry gorilla. It is a theory that fails to satisfy one's ideas of causation; no reason is given why any step in the sequence should lead to the next. It is a theory that ignores, and is incapable of explaining, a very remarkable stage in the progress—namely, the blood-frenzy described by Frazer.

We have seen that it is probable that head-hunting and human sacrifice had quite independent origins. But it has been asserted that head-hunting is a modified form of human sacrifice. Another writer makes the contrary assertion—namely, that human sacrifice developed from head-hunting.\* Neither of these authors offers any evidence that a change of this nature ever did take place, and a further reason for disregarding their views is to be found in the fact that neither of them gives any reason why such changes should occur.

It has been suggested that war originated in order to get victims for human sacrifice.† This idea appears to ascribe quite miraculous powers to some early medicine-man. It implies that he first invented and discovered the utility of human sacrifice, that he then presented his views to his fellow-tribesmen in such alluring terms that, though they had never, on this hypothesis, heard of war, they began to attack neighbouring tribes with whom they had previously lived on peaceable terms. This hypothesis introduces more difficulties than it pretends to solve and does not deserve any serious attention.

\* *Children of the Sun*, by W. J. Perry (Methuen, 1923), p. 231, and "The Significance of Head-hunting in Assam," by J. H. Hutton in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society*, Vol. LVIII, 1928, p. 399.

† *Children of the Sun*, by W. J. Perry (Methuen, 1923), p. 238.

#### 4. *Conclusions*

In this chapter we have considered a group of desires, including both likes and dislikes, that are not produced by any process of reasoning in the individual, that are not due to events connected with our present environment (except in so far as such events may spur these desires into activity) and that maintain certain persistent customs.

Certain of these desires we have sought to explain as having originated as accompaniments of fighting in berserker rage. But the period of enhanced pugnacity on which we have sought to put the blame for this legacy from the past is likely to have affected the minds of our ancestors at other times than during actual combat, and to have led to mental dispositions appropriate to a state of society in which every man had frequent reason either to fear his neighbour or to rely on him for protection. In the succeeding chapters we shall find good reasons for believing that this has occurred and that such dispositions have been transmitted to us and affect our conduct in many ways.

Grounds have been mentioned for suspecting that the impressions on the minds of our ancestors that have had the greatest effect in this way took place during a period of conflict. It is likely that this occurred while conventions were being thrashed out as to ownership of the new kinds of property that came into existence when men first began to raise crops and to keep herds of domestic animals. Let us now consider certain points about which it is possible that advancing knowledge may result in a modification of this theory.

Against the idea that cannibalism began as a widespread custom only at the beginning of neolithic times may be cited the fact that a few remains of cannibal feasts dating from palæolithic times are known.\* Hence either the

\* The earliest type of man yet discovered, *Sinanthropus*,

above theory needs modifying or palæolithic cannibalism was not due to a widespread custom, but consisted of isolated occurrences due to famine. Also it may be objected against the suggestion of the late origin of warfare that scenes said to be of battles are depicted in paintings of palæolithic age in a cave in Spain.\* This is a matter of interpretation. If, as is by no means certain, it is correct, warfare must have begun at an earlier date than is often supposed. A hunting population, it may be urged, is necessarily more sparse than an agricultural population. Palæolithic war, if it existed, is likely therefore to have been less frequent than in neolithic times, and consequently less likely to have given rise to barbarous customs.

Another criticism of my theory is that it assumes that our ancestors had nothing to fight for, apart from their territorial rights, until the coming of crops and herds. But it is likely that they fought for the possession of their females. Rage due to jealousy is likely to have been greater than it was with their less intelligent ancestors. Increase of intelligence implies an increase of susceptibility, and this may to some extent have outrun the means of its control. Recognition of this probability has led Atkinson and Lang to formulate a theory of the development of society among our earliest human ancestors.† It is to the effect that, owing to the jealousy of the old man of the family, each young male, as he reached maturity, was driven away and had to lead a bachelor life till he was able to capture a female from elsewhere. His return to the family was then permitted on the condition that he

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according to Prof. Franz Weidenreich, probably indulged in cannibalism (see an article by him in the *Times* of February 18, 1937).

\* *Fossil Man in Spain*, by H. Obermaier (Humphrey Milford, 1923), p. 251.

† *Social Origins and Primal Law*, by Andrew Lang and J. J. Atkinson (Longmans Green, 1903). Approval of their views is expressed by Professor McDougall in his *Social Psychology*, p. 242.



avoided the females who belonged to the patriarch; conversely, the patriarch had to avoid the female belonging to the young man. The period of conflict that occurred while these conventions were being developed led, according to this theory, to the practice of exogamy and also to the dislike of incest. Certain anthropologists have refused to accept this theory because, as they assert, it fails to explain dislike of unions between father and daughter. But this objection is of no great weight, as one might expect such dislike to develop if the young men failed to distinguish between the daughters and the daughters-in-law of the head of the family.

This "primal law theory," as it is designated by its sponsors, is of such service in explaining dislike of incest that it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that it represents at least an approximation to the truth. But it may be pointed out that conflicts due to jealousy must usually have consisted in the punishment of a single offender, while in conflicts for defending crops and herds many individuals on both sides are likely to have been involved. It is conceivable that the latter class of combats were more capable than the former of giving rise to ferocious customs.

### CHAPTER III

## PERSISTENT CUSTOMS RELATING TO BLOOD

IN this and the succeeding chapters we have to consider details of the evidence on which the assertions made in the last chapter are based. We will begin with blood-drinking as a gesture of hatred, and then consider the counterpart customs of drinking or tasting blood as an expression of friendship.

#### 1. *Blood-feuds and Blood-frenzy*

The custom of drinking enemy blood in past times has been widespread throughout the world. It has been suggested that this is done to acquire the enemy's strength or his courage or to gain favour from his ghost. A proof that this theory is untrue, in many instances, is yielded by facts relating to blood-feuds and blood-frenzy. These facts appear to leave no room for doubt that the blood-drinking that occurs in connection with such customs is an expression of revenge and hatred. It will be shown also that this explanation is not made improbable by the "blood-covenant custom," in which two persons drink each other's blood as a sign and compact of friendship. We will begin by considering the connection between the shedding of blood and blood-feuds.

Among the Hallenga, an Abyssinian tribe, when a murderer has been captured by relatives of the deceased, a family feast takes place at which the culprit is present as an unwilling guest. His throat is slowly cut and the blood is caught in a bowl. From this every one has to drink during the dying struggles of the victim.

Among various tribes in Morocco, in blood-feuds, the avenger licks off the blood from the blade of the dagger with which he has killed his victim. In one instance related by Westermarck, the avenger bit off a piece of flesh from the dead body and sucked the blood from it. This is remarkable, as cannibalism is so strictly forbidden in the Mahomedan religion.

Those instances in which the killing is prompted by motives of revenge and hatred seem to leave little room for doubt that the drinking of the blood of the victim was due to these motives, and not to any idea of forming a covenant of friendship with his ghost. The connection between shedding of blood and the act of revenge in blood-feuds is further exemplified in a curious custom met with in the Caucasus. Here the blood-feud has greater power and is a more serious social evil than in any other part of the world. According to Essad-Bey, almost every tenth Caucasian is involved in some affair connected with a blood-feud. In rare cases in which there can be no room for doubt that the "murder" is obviously and clearly accidental it may be possible for peace to be regained without further killing. In such instances the contract of agreement usually contains a clause to the effect that the murderer shall have an ear or a finger cut off and that the blood flowing from the wound shall be sprinkled on the grave of the dead man.\*

One result of the rise of the intelligence of our ancestors to human level was the development of the memory and of the powers of realizing. The resulting long-continuing memory of injuries received was, without doubt, one factor in the development of the blood-feud impulse. Thus there is a certain presumption that the impulse was not inherited from our animal ancestors. It resembles other persistent customs in that it has been slowly losing

\* *Twelve Secrets of the Caucasus*, by Essad-Bey (Nash & Grayson, 1931), p. 104.

its sway during the historical period. The efforts of early legislators were, in great part, directed towards regulating and checking it. It also resembles other persistent customs in its sporadic reappearances in communities in which it has been extinct for centuries.

In Europe the blood-feud impulse occasionally appears in isolated instances affecting single individuals. The following is an example. It was related in the German newspapers in January, 1930.

Max Wille, a sergeant in the Frankfurt police, was known as a man of exemplary character. Two years before the incident about to be related, his father had been killed by a peasant named Klaus. This man afterwards barricaded himself in a house, was besieged by the police, and at last shot dead. Two years after this tragedy, Sergeant Wille went to the house in which the Klaus family lived and shot dead the father of the murderer. Wille had intended to kill the rest of the family also, but owing to the piteous entreaties of the younger son, he desisted. He then went to the nearest town, Fritzlar, and gave himself up. He said that since the death of his father he had had no peace of mind. He had struggled against the passion for vengeance to which in the end he had succumbed. It is noteworthy that there was no attempt to inflict vengeance on the person who had done him wrong, but in true blood-feud style his desire was to take vengeance on the family of the wrongdoer.

Another instance of blood-feud coming from the same district of Germany deserves notice as it affords some indication of the date at which the sway of the blood-feud began to decline in that country.

In the year A.D. 745 or thereabouts, Gewelib, a man of strict morals, was appointed bishop of Mentz on the Rhine, a town about a hundred miles distant from Fritzlar. Gewelib's father had been slain in battle against the Saxons a short time previously. The bishop, having discovered the man by whose hand his father had fallen, lured him, by a friendly

message, to an interview on an island in the river and, on meeting him, stabbed him to the heart. The king and nobles approved of the deed, but Saint Boniface, who had just been invested as Metropolitan by the Pope, insisted on the bishop being put on trial. This was done and, in consequence, Gewelib was deprived of his bishopric.\* Boniface was a native of Wessex in England. In that country legislation against blood-feuds had been introduced by King Ina, who came to the throne in A.D. 689. But the blood-feud custom still persisted for some time. Reference is made to it in the laws of Edmund and also of Canute (A.D. 1016-1036).

We now have to pass on to instances in which the drinking of blood is still more clearly an expression of revenge and hatred than is the shedding of blood in blood-feuds.

In the year 526 B.C., during an invasion of Egypt by the Persian king Cambyses, the Greek and Carian mercenaries who were in the Egyptian army learnt of the treason of their former chief Phenes. Having captured his children, they took them to the space between the opposing armies, cut their throats, and drank their blood. Having thus indulged their vengeance on these unfortunate children, they rushed into battle and were defeated.

These Carian mercenaries came from Asia Minor, in which country this method of indulging hatred of enemies seems still to persist. During an agitation there for the revival of the Khilafat, in December, 1930, an outbreak of rebellion took place among the Dervishes. They are reported to have killed an officer of the Turkish army and to have drunk his blood.

In neither of these instances is there any room for the suggestion that the blood was drunk in order to acquire good qualities of the victims or to allay their ghosts. There is no room for doubt that the blood-drinking was an expression of hatred and vengeance.

The custom of drinking enemy blood has been far more widely spread in the past than it is to-day. Usually no

\* *History of Latin Christianity*, by H. H. Milman, Vol. II, p. 301.

reason is recorded for the practice. In some modern instances it is said to be done with the object of acquiring some good qualities from the deceased. Such a reason is not necessarily the source of the practice. There are good grounds for suspecting that the idea of getting advantage from drinking the blood is merely an excuse for following a custom the original motive of which has been forgotten.

In some instances in which no motive is put forward for drinking the blood of enemies, the circumstances under which it is done are such as to make it practically certain that the custom is an expression of hatred and ferocity. For instance, the ancient Gauls and also the ancient inhabitants of Ireland not only drank the blood of their enemies, but also painted themselves with it. Instances of actual bathing in enemy blood, accompanied by practices of revolting ferocity, are recorded by Essad-Bey as having occurred in Baku during the Great War.\* An analogous custom is that of smearing the blood of an animal that has been killed in the chase on the faces of newcomers to a hunt in England. There, in stag-hunting, when the animal has been killed, any newcomer to the hunt is "blooded" by having his face thus decorated. In Scotland the practice exists in connection with fox-hunting. And here not only any new recruit among the huntsmen, but also any child who may be present is liable to have his face treated in this way. With some South American tribes enemy blood is rubbed on the faces of their children to make them brave.†

References to blood-drinking may be found in mythology. The Hindu goddess Durga or Kali, in a fight with a giant named Manda, seized him by the hair, cut off his head, and, holding it over her mouth, drank the blood that dripped from it. Afterwards, having despatched

\* *Blood and Oil in the Caucasus*, by Essad-Bey (Nash & Grayson, 1930), pp. 88 and 247.

† Article, "Cannibalism," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, p. 199.

another giant and also his army, she sat down and drank the blood of her slain enemies. The heroes of the *Nibelungenlied*, having been advised to drink the blood of their enemies, did so and found themselves to be refreshed by so doing. The Chippeway Indians of North America drink the blood and eat the heart of any enemy who is an object of special hatred.

Sometimes the motive for the practice is not recorded. For instance, in ancient Greece a murderer would lick up and then spit out the blood of his victim. It is recorded of a French buccaneer that he used to lick the blade of his sabre each time he used it to kill a prisoner.\* During a rebellion in Ireland in the year 1798 a massacre of Protestants took place at Scullabogue. The rebels, after killing their victims, "took pleasure in licking their spears." It is also recorded that "a rebel said he would try a taste of Orange blood, and that he dipped a toothpick in a wound of one of the Protestants who was shot and then put it into his mouth." It is of interest to notice that the desire to taste enemy blood came into this man's mind when he was under the influence of intense hatred of his opponents, but at a time when he himself was not engaged in combat.†

A very remarkable and interesting superstition relating to blood is described by Sir J. G. Frazer. There is, he says, a widespread belief that anyone who kills an enemy or executes a criminal will fall into a state of frenzy unless he tastes the blood of his victim. For example, in the Nandi tribe the executioner drinks the water with which he washes the blood off his weapon, asserting that if he did not do so he would become frenzied. In Burma executioners of the Shan tribe think they would fall ill and die if they omitted to taste the blood of their victims.

\* *Sir Henry Morgan*, by W. S. Roberts, p. 46.

† *Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland from the Arrival of the English*, by Sir R. Musgrave (London, 1801), p. 428.

Montenegrins used to lick the blood from their weapon after killing a Turk. They did so under the impression that if they did not do so they would lose their presence of mind.

These stories of the executioner tasting the blood of his victims are not dismissed by Frazer as based on idle superstitions. He makes a very remarkable suggestion about them. He says: "The accounts of the madness which is apt to befall slayers seem too consistent to be dismissed as pure fictions of the savage imagination. However we may reject the native explanation of such fits of frenzy, the report points to a real berserker frenzy or unbridled thirst for blood which comes over savages when they are excited by combat, and which may prove dangerous to friends as well as foes."\* Among the inhabitants of Celebes there is a regular expression for the state of temporary insanity excited by the sight of or even by the thought of human blood. This blood-frenzy could be allayed only by drinking wine or water out of enemy skulls, by eating a piece of enemy brain, or by licking up the blood of the slain.

Philological evidence also gives reason for believing that the practice of drinking enemy blood was more widespread in the past than it is to-day. We say in a jocular way that we want to have a man's blood if we are angry with him, or we may say that we have bloodthirsty feelings towards him. Our ancestors had a wider range of words of similar import.

Bloodthirsty in Anglo-Saxon is "blód-hreów." German has "blutdürstig," Dutch has "bloeddorstig," in Swedish there is "blodtorstig," and in Danish "blodtoerstig." In Anglo-Saxon one might say that a man has a "blódig-toþ," literally meaning a bloody tooth. Perhaps this meant that he was fond of blood, just as to-day we say that a man has a sweet tooth if he is fond of sugar. The

\* *Psyche's Task* (Macmillan, 1913), p. 122.



Anglo-Saxon could indulge his liking for blood by having a "blód-drync" or "blód-dryncas"—terms for a drinking of blood. He also had the word "blod-pigen" for tasting blood. He might say that Blod-pigen is better than water when he thought of tasting the blood of enemies. Icelandic, the most ancient of the Scandinavian languages, has the words "bloð-drekka" for blood-drinker and "bloð-drykkja" for a drink of blood. It is obviously very unlikely that so many words relating to blood-drinking would have been formed if they were required only for figurative expressions.

Similar indirect evidence comes from other countries. According to Wallis Budge, there is an Egyptian hieroglyph to designate a drinker of blood.

Blood-drinking was not indulged in by the soldiers of the kings of Burma, at least in historical times. But yet the name for a platoon of a Burmese regiment was "Company of Blood-drinkers" and the leader of the platoon was known as the blood-drinker.\*

The distribution of the custom of drinking the blood of enemies throughout the world is shown in the map, Fig. 1.

A presumption that others have formed opinions similar to those here expressed on the import of words relating to blood is afforded by an old story of a professor in Edinburgh who, after giving a lecture on instinct, asked his class for a definition of it. There was a pause, but at length a wild-looking, shock-headed Highlander stood up and, glaring at the professor, replied that "instinct is the thirst for blood."†

\* This curious fact is mentioned in an official publication, written in the Burmese language, entitled *Myamma Min Okcho-koon Sadan*. This was published by the Rangoon Government Press (1931-1933). I am indebted for this information to Mr. J. A. Stewart, I.C.S.

† *Pictures and Politics*, by A. P. Laurie (International Publishing Co., 1934).

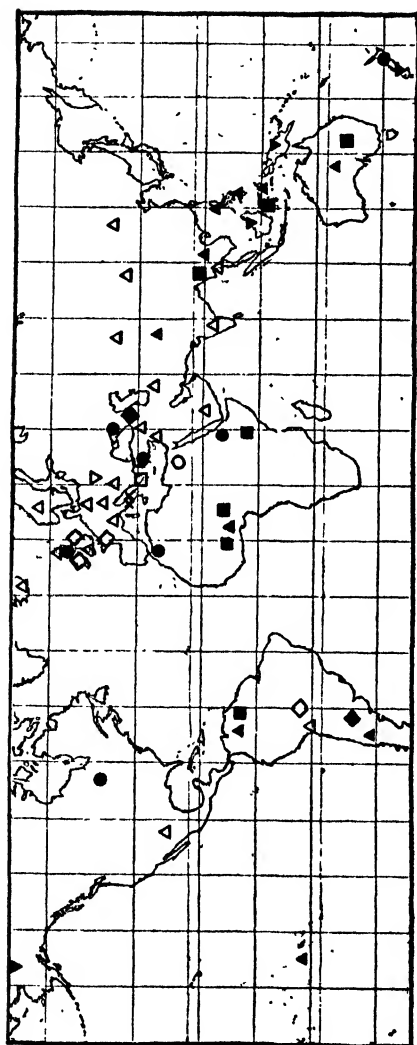


FIG. 1.—DISTRIBUTION OF THE CUSTOM OF DRINKING ENEMY BLOOD.

- |   |   |   |                 |
|---|---|---|-----------------|
| ● | Drunk as gesture of hatred.                             | ○ | Ditto formerly. |
| ■ | Drunk to prevent frenzy.                                | ◻ | Ditto formerly. |
| ◆ | Drinking and painting oneself with.                     | ◊ | Ditto formerly. |
| ▲ | Drunk for no explicit reason.                           | △ | Ditto formerly. |
| ▼ | Drunk to gain strength, etc.                            | ▽ | Ditto formerly. |
| ✕ | Blood of victim drunk by murderer to ensure his escape. |   |                 |

(2) *Drinking the Blood of Friends*

Reference has been made in Chapter I to the custom of drinking the blood of loved ones when in a paroxysm of grief at their death. We will now consider this and other counterpart customs connected with blood. The following instances are given by Carmichael.\*

(1) From a song by Nic Coiseam composed after the battle of Carnish in 1601 :—

“ The blood of thy fragrant body  
Was soaking through thy linen,  
I myself was sucking it  
Till my breath became hoarse.”

(2) Another song apparently from the same source says :—

“ I staunched thy wounds,  
And they all too numerous,  
And I drank of thy red blood  
More sweet to me than wine.”

(3) When Campbell of Breadalbane and his son Colin slew Grigor Macgregor, probably in the year 1611,† his widow is said to have lamented in the following words :—

“ They placed thy head on a block of oak  
And they poured thy blood to the ground ;  
Had I there a cup in my hand,  
I would have drunk of it my fill.”

(4) Ann Campbell, daughter of Donald Campbell who had entertained Prince Charlie at Scalpay in 1746, was about to be married to Captain Allan Morrison Crossbost. He was drowned on his way to the wedding. She composed a poem in Gaelic lamenting her lover, in which she said :—

\* *Carmina Gadelica*, by A. Carmichael (Oliver and Boyd, 1928), p. 297.

† In the *Scotch Peerage*, Vol. II, pp. 185 and 189, it is related that Sir D. Campbell and his son Colin were fighting the Clan Gregor in that year.

" Would, O King, that I were near thee,  
 On whatever bank or creek thou art stranded,  
 I would drink a drink, gainsay it who would,  
 Not of the rich red wine of Spain,  
 The blood of thy body, love, would I prefer,  
 The blood that comes down from the hollow of thy throat."

(5) In Irish history it is recorded that when the three sons of Usnack had been slain, their mother Deirdre was distracted. She fell on the ground and drank their blood.\*

(6) Also in Irish history, Emmer is said to have sucked the blood of her dead husband.\*

(7) A description has been quoted from Frazer of an old woman drinking the blood of her foster-son after his execution. It is recorded that as she did so she said that the earth was not worthy to drink it.† This is an instance of a widespread superstition. Varied and trivial excuses are given for this dislike of blood falling on the ground, none of which gives any clue as to its origin. In England, in Sussex, in recent years, the belief has been held that any ground on which human blood happens to fall will remain barren for ever. In West Africa and in Madagascar the belief is held that any blood that falls on the ground if it came into the hands of a magician might be used by him to work some harmful spell. A similar dislike is also felt in Australia and New Zealand. The antiquity of the superstition is indicated by a reference to it in Hindu mythology. During a battle the goddess Durga is said to have attacked a principal commander of her opponent's army. She covered him with wounds, but from every drop of his blood that fell on the ground a thousand giants arose. Then another goddess promised her help provided Durga would drink the blood of her enemies before it reached the ground. Having adopted this precaution, she continued the battle, and at length won a

\* *Literary History of Ireland*, by D. Hyde (Fisher Unwin, 1899), pp. 315 and 352.

† *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 244.

glorious victory. After this she sat down to feed on the slain.\*

A Chinese student, in his autobiography, describes the execution of a bandit leader. The relatives of the culprit spread a red woollen rug on the ground "in order that his blood might not fall on the naked earth." †

The desire to drink the blood of friends is a likely source of the custom of blood-drinking in blood-brotherhood ceremonies.

The custom of blood-brotherhood is widespread and ancient. An old writer tells us that "among barbarous peoples the fraternity of arms was established by the horrid custom of the new brothers drinking each other's blood. . . . The chivalry of Europe borrowed this sacred bond from the Scandinavians," ‡ In Scandinavian mythology the gods Odin and Lok became blood-brothers by mingling their blood in a bowl and drinking it together.

Trumbull says of such ceremonies that "the intercommingling of the blood of the two organisms is, therefore, according to this view, equivalent to the intercommingling of the lives, of the personalities, of the natures, thus brought together." § It may be suggested that there is here a little too much of the twentieth-century theologian's way of looking at things and too little reference to the facts of the case. More often than not there was no "intercommingling" of the blood, at least in the sense of the blood of the parties to the contract being mixed before being drunk. In the case of the Scythians, however, there was such a mixing. Blood from a cut on each party was dropped into a bowl of wine. Into this were dipped a javelin, a scimitar, some arrows, and a battle-axe.

\* *Hindu Mythology*, by W. J. Wilkins (Thacker & Co., 1882), p. 305.

† *Chinese Testament*, by S. Tretiakov (Gollancz, 1934), p. 206.

‡ *History of Chivalry*, by Charles Mills (1825), Vol. I, p. 118.

§ *The Blood Covenant*, by H. Clay Trumbull (T. & T. Black, Edinburgh).

Then each party in turn drank from the bowl. Such a procedure suggests that the idea of fighting side by side underlay the custom. Besides drinking the blood of friends in this way, the Scythians also drank the blood of their enemies. There is no reason for supposing that drinking the blood of an enemy was with them a means of allaying his ghost, any more than was their custom of making a napkin from his scalp.

With some Red Indians of North America a man brings to a friend a freshly-taken scalp, which he cuts in two. He gives half to his friend, who thereupon becomes his blood-brother. Here also the ceremony seems to suggest fighting side by side and sharing the plunder, rather than any union of lives or personalities, as suggested by Trumbull.

As we shall find to be the usual rule with customs depending on cave-man influences, blood-brotherhood ceremonies were far more frequent in the past than they are to-day.

In some of the few historical records available in which details of the ceremony are given, the blood was sucked from a wound. Tacitus tells us that Iberian and Armenian princes, when forming an alliance, sucked blood from a cut in each other's thumbs in turn. Herodotus says that the Medes and Lydians sucked each other's blood from small cuts in their arms when taking an oath.

The ceremony as carried out to-day sometimes shows a refinement, in that sucking from a wound is omitted. In the Dyak blood-brotherhood blood from each person is put on a betel leaf and chewed. In another Borneo tribe each of the participants smokes, in a cigarette, a drop of the other's blood. In various localities in Africa, in the Philippines and elsewhere, the blood is taken mixed with water, wine, or beer.

A very curious survival of the custom is mentioned by Trumbull. He says that he had heard a lady say that

when she was at school, if any of her companions pricked her finger, one or other would say, "Oh, let me suck the blood: then we shall be friends." Was this due to a tradition of the blood-brotherhood ceremony having been handed down from generation to generation of school children, though apparently forgotten by adults, or was it due to a survival of the desire to drink blood transmitted in the same obscure way as are other persistent customs?

Trumbull has suggested that the custom of shaking hands arose from offering the hand for the blood-brotherhood ceremony. A suggestion of this kind does not seem to deserve any very serious consideration. It would be scarcely more fanciful to suggest that kissing arose as a pretence of sucking the other person's blood on such occasions.

Other superstitions relating to blood remain to be mentioned.

In the first place we may mention the liking and disliking of the use of the word "bloody" as an expletive. The antiquity of the use of its French equivalent in this way has been alluded to by Miss Eileen Power. She quotes from an old French book on housekeeping in which it is recommended that servants should be forbidden to swear at "bad bloody fevers, the bad bloody week, the bad bloody day" ("de males sanglantes fièvres, de male sanglante sepmaine, de male sanglante journée.")\*

Connected with the liking or disliking of the word "bloody" there appears to exist a liking, and more frequently a disliking, of the idea of or of the sight of blood. We have already, in the preceding note, referred to the custom now existing in England of "blooding" a newcomer to the chase by rubbing his face with the blood of the animal that has been killed, whether stag or fox or hare. This is done in the excitement of the chase and, in common parlance, "in hot blood." Any child who

\* *Mediæval People* (Methuen, 1924), p. 187.

submits to this treatment regards it as a joke. But a child may react differently to the sight of blood on other occasions. If, "in cold blood," some blood from a slaughter-house is obtained to illustrate a lecture to schoolboys, some of them, as I am informed by Mr. M. D. Hill, may feel disgust, and may even feel faint at the sight. As many as perhaps one in twelve of the older boys react in this way. Susceptibility of the younger boys is much less. It would be of interest to obtain further data on this point. The facts, as stated by Mr. Hill, give a hint of the arising of a dislike that is analogous to the change of mental disposition involved in "counterpart customs." This dislike of the sight of blood seems, in these instances, to develop independently of any effort of the schoolmaster or of any obvious effect of the environment.



## CHAPTER IV

### CANNIBALISM IN EUROPE

#### I. *Dislike of Cannibalism*

WE will preface our account of cannibalism in Europe with a reference to the dislike of cannibalism that, in recent years, has been spreading throughout the world, a phenomenon for which no satisfying explanation is as yet available.

Dislike amounting to disgust at the idea may be felt even in communities in which cannibalism partakes of the nature of a religious duty. This is recorded in the Fiji Islands, where individuals are met with who, as Westermarck assures us, feel disgust at the practice that cannot be entirely explained as due to the influence of foreign morality or creeds.\*

Disgust at cannibalism seems sometimes to influence scientific writers when they have occasion to refer to the subject. They may try to minimize the prevalence of the practice or to dismiss it with some trivial explanation. One authority, after explaining how in certain Borneo tribes the warriors bite small pieces from the bodies of their slain enemies, goes on to say that "it would, we think, be grossly unfair to describe any of these peoples as cannibals on account of these practices." Thus the imputation of cannibalism is regarded as an accusation. It might also be suggested that if we cannot describe these Borneo tribes as good cannibals, we can, at least, regard them as interesting cannibals, for such restricted cannibalism is a common occurrence and yields evidence of completer

\* *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck (Macmillan & Co., 2nd Ed., 1926), Vol. II, p. 573.

cannibalism of former times. One reason for this assertion is the fact of the occurrence of intermediate stages between full cannibalism and cannibalism reduced to licking the finger after touching the flesh or brain of the dead enemy.

Dawkins, in referring to cannibalism, calls it "this atrocious practice." He suggests that it "probably became ingrafted into the religious ideas of the nations of antiquity from the horror by which it is surrounded." \* Its becoming ingrafted anywhere does not, as he seems to think, furnish any clue to its origin. He gives no proof that the nations of antiquity ever felt any horror at the practice, any more than do the Solomon Islanders of to-day. These savages, we are told, eat their enemies "with frantic joy." How does Dawkins know that our ancestors, who painted themselves with enemy blood and drank out of enemy skulls, did not also regard the eating of enemy flesh as the natural, proper, and agreeable way of celebrating a victory?

Whether or not cannibalism first became known to mankind as a result of famine, there seems no room for doubt, as explained in Chapter II, that, with many races, the eating of enemies became a widespread and firmly established custom. The eating of enemies with frantic joy or in frenzied rage is something more than a wish to conform to custom. It was a specific desire for the eating of enemy flesh, a desire that came from the past, not by tradition or by suggestion, but in some obscure way, and probably in the same obscure way as do the desires by which other persistent customs are maintained. That the desire to eat enemy flesh should, in many instances, gradually die away in the course of ages is not surprising. Such waning of desires underlying persistent customs is a very general phenomenon. What is surprising is that

\* *Cave-Hunting*, by W. Boyd Dawkins (Macmillan, 1874), p. 261.

this waning has so frequently been followed by an intense feeling of disgust at the idea of cannibalism. As we shall see below, such feeling of disgust may exist in communities in which vestiges of cannibal habits still persist.

The analogy of the changes undergone by other persistent customs might lead one to anticipate that, as the desire to eat enemies became less imperative, it might continue to exist in a modified form. That such changes have occurred is proved by the phenomena of restricted cannibalism. With many races there is no eating of the whole body of the slain enemy. Only a single organ—either the heart or liver, for instance—is devoured. With other races a small piece of enemy flesh is bitten off and eaten. With Shan soldiers there used to be a biting of the body of the enemy, but this did not amount to a biting off. In another form of restricted cannibalism the eating of enemy flesh is reserved for the priest or king. In the Philippines the heart of an enemy was eaten by the priest, and it is known that this custom is a replacement of an earlier custom in which the cannibalism was not so restricted. Sometimes restricted cannibalism forms part of a coronation ceremony, as when the new king had to eat part of his predecessor. Here there is room for the suspicion that theological imagining played a part in devising the custom, but it does not seem likely to have done so unless the eating of relations was already an established practice.

The changes that we have just described, in the extent to which enemies were eaten, afford no evidence as to how disgust at the practice first arose. Let us now see whether an explanation can be found in connection with the eating of friends and relations. According to E. S. Hartland, who has made a remarkable study of the subject, the funeral feast in its original form consisted in eating the body of the deceased.\* He has suggested that dislike of

\* *The Legend of Perseus*, by E. S. Hartland (David Nutt, 1895), Vol. II, p. 287.

cannibalism began with the dislike of the eating of relatives. This theory seems to imply that the eating of enemies preceded the eating of relations. This may have happened. The desires involved in cave-man influences are apt to change their aim as they lose their hold. We have seen that in Scotland and Ireland the desire to drink the blood of friends long survived the desire to drink the blood of enemies. We have suggested that the drinking of the blood of friends arose owing to a change of aim of this nature. The eating of the flesh of relations may have been derived from an analogous change of aim. So many different reasons are given for the custom that we are justified in refusing to accept any of them as an explanation of its source. It is impossible to hold that, at a time when eating of relations was unknown, one man thought of doing so in order to absorb the soul of the deceased, that another man, also ignorant of cannibalism, thought of it in order to prevent the soul of the deceased from weakening, and that a third man did so in order to form a blood-covenant with the ghost of the deceased.

Thus the eating of relations may have been derived from a previous custom of eating enemies. But it is also possible that the two customs had independent origins. Eating of enemies may have been a result of using the teeth when fighting, while eating relations may have arisen as a consequence of our anthropoid ancestors acquiring carnivorous habits. Whichever alternative represents the truth, we are left with the unsolved problem as to how disgust at cannibalism first arose. With us the idea of eating relations is so repulsive that it is difficult to realize that an explanation of this disgust is needed.

The analogy of the blood-drinking practice affords ground for suspecting that eating the flesh of relations became customary because pleasure was felt in so doing. In some instances, according to Hartland, the flesh of the dead is eaten only in the delirium of grief.\* This recalls

\* *Loc. cit.*, p. 286.

the instances mentioned in Gaelic poems, in which there was a desire to drink the blood of someone to whom one was bound by ties of strongest affection. That such pleasure in eating the flesh of a loved one should wane with time is in accord with what happens with other cave-man customs. But no reason is apparent why such waning should be accompanied by a dislike of the custom.

That the custom of eating relations involved something that was felt as unpleasant or inconvenient is made probable by the very large number of instances collected by Hartland in which funeral ceremonies seem designed to disguise, restrict, or replace the actual eating of the corpse. Either only part of the corpse is eaten or some ceremony is observed that in some way recalls such eating. Food, for instance, is placed in contact with the corpse and then eaten. Or there is a ceremonial eating of food that has been passed across the table on which the corpse has lain. Or cakes having the human form and known as "corpse cakes" are eaten. Or there is some special kind of food used only at funerals. At Amersden in Oxfordshire there used to be a custom of giving to the minister in the church porch, after the burial, a cake and a flagon of ale. It is possible that this is a further restriction of such customs, and, if so, it points to a time when ceremonial cannibalism at the burial was confined to the priest. Customs of this kind exist or have existed till recently in Italy, Roumania, Albania, Bavaria, Wales, and England. On the island of Vate, in the New Hebrides, the aged were put to death by burying. A hole was dug and the victim was placed within it in a sitting posture with a live pig tied under each arm. Before closing the grave the cords were cut; the pigs were taken out and afterwards killed and eaten at the funeral feast. This custom is obviously analogous to the eating of food that has been placed in contact with the corpse as occurs in more civilized countries.

The dislike of cannibalism that has spread throughout the world in modern times is not a phenomenon that merits being dismissed with an explanation made up out of one's head on the spur of the moment. The eating of the corpse must once, as Hartland says, have prevailed almost everywhere among the lower races—if, that is, his interpretation of the funeral feast is correct. Yet almost everywhere such feasts have been replaced by observances in which the eating is of a kind that completely fails to suggest to the mourners any idea of cannibalism.

While some savages make no attempt to conceal the practice, others do so. The Maoris of New Zealand and the Bataks of Sumatra are ashamed even of the fact that their ancestors were cannibals. This feeling of shame is not fully explained by the knowledge that cannibalism is regarded with disgust by the white races. It is said of some Australian natives that, "unlike many other offences with which they are justly charged . . . this one in general they knew to be wrong, their behaviour when questioned showing that they erred knowingly and wilfully." \* Why should they regard cannibalism as wrong and not regard as wrong other of their customs that are regarded with disapproval by their white neighbours? Why is it that, though some barbarous customs are held by savage races with tenacity, cannibalism, in so many parts of the world, has been so easily eradicated by the influence of civilized races?

An interesting stage in the dropping of cannibal habits is shown by a head-hunting tribe of north Borneo who profess to be horrified at the idea of cannibalism, but when a captured head was being prepared, if it was of a great warrior, they would put their finger into the brain and lick it. The chiefs expressly denied that this was done to get the courage or other quality of the victim. On the

\* *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 572.

contrary, they said, it was done in order to show courage. They would say, "So-and-so is very brave; see how many men's flesh he has eaten." With another of these tribes a small piece of the liver would be eaten with a similar object.\* An analogous case is presented by the Gios, a Liberian tribe. They have or did have the habit of eating their enemies. But yet, when asked whether they ate human flesh, they were horrified and offended at the idea. "No; never!" they said; "but we eat war." To them their prisoners were no longer men: they were something that had to be eaten as part of the act of conquest.†

In neither of these two instances is there any reason for suspecting that the dislike of cannibalism was due to any outside influence. It was home-made. These instances illustrate the fact that the desires concerned in persistent customs are not immortal. However strong at the outset, they gradually lose their hold, and while this is happening they may go through a temporary phase in which they are changed into something resembling their opposite.

The progress from the mental attitude that tolerates cannibalism to the attitude that regards the eating of enemies as atrocious is one that has occurred in many parts of the world and among peoples of widely different social habits. The feeling of disgust at cannibalism is well marked among races whose immediate ancestors have been addicted to the practice.

One might make the guess that dislike of cannibalism is due to the spread of humane feelings. Such a guess presupposes that the spread of humane feelings is understood. This, it may be suggested, is not the case. Dislike of cannibalism may develop where the presence of humane feelings of other kinds is not apparent. For example, the

\* *The Pagans of North Borneo*, by Owen Rutter (Hutchinson & Co., 1929), p. 203.

† "Werewolves of the Tropics," by A. R. Lindt, in *The Passing Show*, August 29, 1936, p. 11.

natives of Rook, an island off the east coast of New Guinea, used to kill their first-born infants, a practice that seems to be incompatible with any high development of altruistic feelings. Yet they prided themselves on the fact that they buried the corpse of the infant instead of eating it, as did their neighbours.

Disgust at cannibalism is as unexplained as is the desire to offer hospitality to strangers. In either case only improbable guesses can be made as to how the sentiment arose. For example, one may guess that dislike of cannibalism arose owing to an association of the eating of relatives with famine, or perhaps because it became associated with outbreaks of epidemic disease. Neither of these guesses seems to fit the facts. For if dislike of eating of relatives arose in either of these ways, it is not clear how the dislike spread to the eating of enemies. What has to be explained is not simply a not caring for, or a dislike of, such an article of food. What has to be explained is the strong disgust felt at the idea of it, a disgust comparable only to the loathing and disgust felt by some races at the idea of marriage of cousins.

As with hospitality, so with dislike of cannibalism, we can get no further towards an explanation of it than saying that it has some resemblance to other instances of revulsion of feeling described in the first chapter. The possibility is not excluded that primitive man inherited from his animal ancestors an aversion against eating members of his own species, as has been suggested by Westermarck.\* What is to be explained is the aversion to cannibalism in communities whose ancestors were addicted to the practice.

## 2. *Records of Cannibalism in Europe*

Localities in which remains of cannibal feasts or other evidence of former cannibalism have been recorded are

\* *Loc. cit.*, p. 574.



shown in the accompanying map (Fig. 2). These occurrences may be classified in groups, all of which are interesting from different standpoints and deserve our attention. These groups are as follows.

a. *Instances of Restricted Cannibalism for Allaying Mental Anxiety.*

1. In the year 1865, at Ellerwald near Elbing in East Prussia, a man cut a piece of flesh from the body of a woman he had murdered and, after roasting it, ate it in order that he might have "peace of mind and never think of his crime." \*

2. In the district of Ermeland in East Prussia in the middle of the seventeenth century there was a band of robbers who held the belief that eating human flesh was a means of quieting the conscience, for he who had killed a man had only to cut a piece from the body of the victim, and roast and eat it, and he would never think again about his evil deed. †

Going outside Europe, we find a similar superstition in Greenland. In that country a slain man is said to have the power of "rushing into" his murderer, who accordingly protects himself by eating a part of the liver of his victim. ‡

In the above instances the partial cannibalism was employed to quiet some form of mental distress.

3. In the year 1888, a man from Sage was put on trial at Oldenburg in West Germany for having eaten parts of murdered victims in order to acquire immunity from his crimes. §

\* W. Mannhardt, *Die praktischen Folgen des Aberglaubens, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Provinz Preussen*, 1878, quoted by H. L. Strack in *The Jew and Human Sacrifice*, 1909, p. 115.

† Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 112.

‡ *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 560.

§ Reported in the *Proceedings of the Berlin Anthropologische Gesellschaft*, April 7, 1888, and quoted by Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 116.

FIG. 2.—RECORDS OF CANNIBALISM IN EUROPE.

Symbols black all over for recent and mediaeval instances. Outlined symbols for ancient records and remains of prehistoric cannibal feasts.

- Cannibalism as gesture of hatred.
- ◆ To ease conscience of murderer.
- To ensure escape of murderer.
- ◆◆ As part of a human sacrifice.
- ▲ As a habit.
- ◇ Perhaps to allay frenzy of combat.
- ✕ Customs extant or recently existing to be derived from former cannibals.

4. Instances are recorded from Angermund near Dusseldorf in 1645, from Bayreuth in the middle of last century, and from Bamberg near Nuremburg in 1577 and 1601, in which thieves committed murders and partial cannibalism in order to make themselves invisible.\* Another instance occurred near Heide in the district of North Dithmarschen in 1815.

The sequence in these different cases seems to be: cannibalism to produce quiet of mind directly, cannibalism to produce quiet of mind indirectly by removing fear of detection, and cannibalism to make detection impossible by conferring invisibility. A further step in the sequence appears to be offered by the Shans of Burma, who, in old times, had the custom of biting the bodies of each of their slain foes when the battle was over. It seems highly improbable that biting the body of an enemy could have been done with the hope of acquiring any of his qualities. It seems far more likely that it is a relic of the custom of eating a portion of the victim in order to allay excitement, and that this again was a relic of a completer cannibalism of an earlier time.

Perhaps it was for a similar reason that the Gauls, as related by Pausanias, when they had captured a city and slain all the male inhabitants, used to taste the blood and eat a small portion of the flesh of each one of them.

The theory of the origin of partial cannibalism now advocated has this advantage over other theories on this subject, that it does not invoke the help of some early medicine-man with amazing powers of imagination.

*b. Instances of Cannibalism as a Symptom of Ferocity and Hatred.*

1. In the year 1149, Dermot, Prince of Leinster in Ireland, who had been expelled from his dominions,

\* I spare my readers the horrible and sensational details of these cases as related by Strack (*loc. cit.*, pp. 112 and 113).

returned with help from abroad and won a victory over his enemies. Thereupon two hundred of their heads were laid at his feet, "who, turning every of them, one by one, to know them, did then for joy hold up both his hands, and with a loud voice thanked God most highly. Among these was the head of one whom especially and above all the rest he mortally hated; and he, taking up that by the hair and ears, with his teeth most horribly and cruelly bit away his nose and lips." \*

Though this is a record of biting rather than of eating, it is to the point, as it is a graphic, if repulsive, instance of the use of teeth in frenzied anger against an enemy.

2. Some time between the years 1394 and 1437, Melville of Glenbervie in Scotland, a sheriff who had made himself unpopular, was seized by his enemies and boiled to death. They drank the decoction thus obtained. It is some satisfaction to read that, for this outrage, three lairds were outlawed.† This instance also, though not conforming to any precise definition of cannibalism, is to the point, as it is a case of hatred being indulged by swallowing portions of a dead enemy.

3. It is recorded of Jean David Nau, a French buccaneer, who came from Orlonne in Western France, and who was living in about the year 1650, that on one of his piratical raids "he slashed open the breast of a prisoner whose answers had displeased him, tore out the heart, and gnawed at it before he dashed it to the ground."‡ Here also we seem to be dealing with an instance of extreme ferocity and hatred. The possibility cannot be quite excluded that this French buccaneer had heard of such a practice among Red Indians. For instance, the Chippeway Indians used

\* *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. XXI, p. 369. According to some accounts it was three hundred, not two hundred heads, that were thus displayed.

† *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, by Sir Walter Scott (Edition of 1869), footnote on p. 396.

‡ *Sir Henry Morgan*, by W. S. Roberts (Hamish Hamilton, 1933), p. 46.

to eat the heart and drink the blood of any enemy whom they specially hated. Possibly also he had heard of the custom of offering the hearts of sacrificial victims to the god in Mexico or in Central America. But he would not have followed this example unless there was something in his mind to which it was congenial.

4. The foregoing instances make it less difficult to believe that eating the hearts of victims of mob violence occurred during the French Revolution.\*

5. De Maricourt saw two Sicilians gnawing the heart of a Neapolitan just killed. He mentions this as an example of the atrocities that happen in civil war.†

Eating the hearts of enemies is, or has been, a widespread custom. The usual excuse given for the practice is that it is a means of acquiring the courage or other good qualities of the deceased. But such an explanation fails completely to fit the above instances, in which it was clearly due to an impulse prompted by hatred and ferocity. Neither will such an explanation apply to cases in which the hearts of sacrificed enemies are torn out and offered to a god.

6. In Greenland the relatives of a murdered man, if highly enraged, will kill the murderer and cut his body to pieces. They then eat parts of the heart and liver, under the impression that so doing will rob his relatives of all courage to attack them.‡ Here it seems probable that the custom of eating the heart, once followed as an indulgence of ferocity, came to be regarded as a proof that those who did so were ferocious and better left alone.

7. In the year 1343 the inhabitants of Florence rebelled against their duke. They refused to treat with him until

\* Article, "Cannibalism," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

† "Sortileges et malefices dans l'Italie meridionale," in *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, Vol. VI, 1883, p. 31.

‡ *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 566.

he had delivered to them his two confidential advisers. This he was obliged to do. One of them, Gugliemo de Scesi, was killed by the mob. The enraged townspeople tore his body to pieces with their hands and teeth and ate his flesh. Having thus satisfied their rage, they took no notice of the other surrendered counsellor, who next day managed to escape.\*

8. During the massacre that took place after the capture of Naples by Cardinal Ruffo in 1799, there were scenes said to have been of unexampled cruelty. Some of the vanquished were burnt alive, and it is said that "men were seen to snatch the flesh from the ashes and greedily devour it."†

9. During a rebellion in Ireland in the year 1798, ill-feeling between British troops and the inhabitants resulted in many outrages by both parties. At Naas a young man named Walsh, being suspected of having murdered an officer, was hanged. His body was dragged through the streets and put on a fire. When it was partly burnt his heart was cut out, tied on to a hurdle, and placed on the roof of a house. A large piece of his flesh was cut off and brought into the next house, where "the mistress of it, Mrs. Nowland, was obliged to furnish a knife, fork, and plate, and an old woman of the name of Daniel was obliged to bring them salt. These two women heard them say that 'Paddy ate sweet' and confirmed with a 'd-mn their eyes.' These women are living and worthy of credit."‡

10. According to Froissart (1337-1410), the inhabitants of Ireland never consider their enemies as dead until "they have taken out their hearts, which they carry off with them, as some say who are well acquainted with their

\* *History of Florence*, by N. Machiavelli, Book II, Chapter VIII.

† *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. IX, p. 563.

‡ From a letter from the Rev. P. Dunn to the Archbishop of Dublin, quoted by Francis Plowden in his *Historical Review of the State of Ireland* (1803), Vol. II, Part 2, p. 708.

manners, that they devour them as delicious morsels." \* As already suggested, the isolated instances of eating the hearts of enemies that have been recorded in Europe in modern times have the appearance of being recrudescences of an ancient mode of indulging one's hatred of the enemy. It is an interesting fact that during the rebellion in Ireland in 1798 instances occurred of the hearts of executed rebels being cut out by British soldiers, but without their being eaten.† This may be regarded as an ameliorated form of the practice that Froissart ascribed to the Irish of his time.

Outside Europe, eating the heart of an enemy is or has been a common practice. Sometimes it is admitted to be an indulgence of hatred. More often reasons of various kinds are given for the practice. These reasons, because they are varied, must be regarded as excuses for retaining a custom the original motive of which has been forgotten.

In the sequel we shall meet with other instances of barbarous customs, justification for which is sought by reasons that deserve to be treated with a similar scepticism.

### c. *Cannibalism Accompanying Human Sacrifice.*

In the village of Stary-Multan, about 200 versts distant from Kasan in Russia, in the year 1892, owing to bad harvests, typhus, and fear of cholera, the inhabitants, who

\* Quoted in *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. XXI, p. 390.

† This cutting out of the heart has not been denied. An officer of the Durham Regiment admitted that he had helped in doing so on one occasion. In view of the detailed evidence quoted in the preceding paragraph about an incident of cannibalism, the denial by the military authorities that it happened is of no great weight. These authorities, we may assume, regarded such an occurrence as being as incredible as disgusting, and the actual culprits had ample reason for denying their guilt. [See *United Irishmen*, by R. R. Madden (Madden & Co., London, 1842), Vol. I, p. 404, and *Strictures upon an Historical Review of the State of Ireland* by Francis Plowden, by Sir R. Musgrave.]

were members of the Russian Orthodox Church, began to fear that they were not worshipping God properly. Accordingly, after finding out by experiment that the sacrifice of animals was useless, they decided on a human sacrifice. They seized a man who had come from another district and who was at the time living in the village, and brought him to the Town Hall. There he was stripped, hung up by the feet, and stabbed by fifteen persons. His blood was carefully collected and drunk, and his heart and lungs were eaten. The village magistrate and the village policeman took part in the ceremony.\*

This sacrifice may have been a result of prevalent tradition. As a matter of fact, as we shall see later, the impulse to carry out human sacrifice has lingered on in Russia up to modern times. But other recently recorded instances of such sacrifice in Russia do not include cannibalism and blood-drinking. These features of this particular case therefore give ground for suspecting that an influence from a distant past was at work, and that it came from the past in the same way as the influence that caused the eating of enemy hearts that has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

d. *Customs Existing or Recently Existing in Europe that are supposed to be Vestiges of Cannibal Habits.*

The custom of eating the bodies of relations is met with in many parts of Africa and Australia. Various excuses are given for the practice: either it is of benefit to the soul of the deceased, or it makes a covenant with him; sometimes it is thought to confer an honour on him. The following customs are regarded as evidence of the former prevalence of this practice among the ancestors of European races.

In Italy sweets having the impression of a skull are

\* Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 40.



eaten on All Souls Day. The custom is known as "eating the dead."

In Albania, at funeral feasts, cakes having the impression of the human form are eaten, and are known as "corpse cakes."

In Rumania a number of beggars may be seen accompanying the funeral procession. Their object is to partake of food that is distributed at the graveside.

In Bavaria, at funeral feasts, cakes are eaten, or used to be eaten, that have been laid on the body of the deceased, and are thereby supposed to convey his virtues or strength to the mourners.

In Wales it has been the custom, up to recent years, to put food on the bier or in contact with the body of the deceased. This was then eaten by a man who was designated as the "sin-eater," and who was supposed, by so doing, to take the blame for the misdeeds of the deceased.

In Derbyshire, after the funeral, wine is offered to the bearers. Drinking it is supposed to take away the dead man's sins.

In Abruzzi, Italy, food used to be eaten on the table where the corpse had lain.

In ancient Greece and Rome food was eaten at the grave of the deceased.

In England a custom has been recorded of eating food that has been passed across the coffin.\*

How can we explain such customs? As with cannibalism, so with these funeral feasts, we are confronted with two alternatives. Either these customs developed independently of one another in different places, or they had a common origin.

The first of these alternatives, for example, implies that eating food that had been in contact with the corpse was discovered by a Welshman to be a good way of relieving

\* This information about the funeral feast is taken from *The Legend of Perseus*, by E. S. Hartland, Vol. II, pp. 287-294.

the deceased of the burden of his sins, while a Bavarian discovered that exactly the same procedure was a good way of absorbing his virtues. It is needless to enlarge on the improbability of two persons arriving at an identical means of attaining such widely different ends. Even had this happened, another improbability would remain—namely, that the two discoverers would have been equally fortunate in getting their nostrums adopted by populations among whom such customs were unknown.

No such difficulties confront the alternative view. This is that these different customs had a common origin in a previously existing habit of eating the dead. Outside Europe this custom now exists in many localities. It is a custom that was more widely spread in the past. E. S. Hartland, who has made an extensive study of this subject, has shown that in many communities observances are met with that are intermediate in character between eating the dead and a mere pretence of so doing.\*

The analogy of other persistent customs indicates that the custom of eating the corpse was maintained owing to a desire to do so. In the course of time this desire has become modified in such a way that it is satisfied by some ceremony that, more or less vaguely, recalls the actual act of cannibalism.

It is of interest to note that these funeral customs appear to affect whole communities. In this feature they differ from recrudescences of the desire to eat the heart of an enemy, which, as we have seen, occurs but rarely, and then only as a desire affecting single individuals.

#### *e. Instances of Habitual Cannibalism in Families or Communities.*

Certain more or less well-established occurrences of habitual cannibalism have been reported from Scotland during the last few centuries.

\* *The Legend of Perseus*, by E. S. Hartland, Vol. II, p. 278.

A family of cave-dwellers having cannibal habits is said to have been discovered in Forfarshire in the fourteenth century. An exactly similar case is said to have been found in Galloway during the fifteenth century.

According to local traditions, giants who used to eat children once lived in Cornwall. One of them is said to have lived in a cave at Trebegean near Land's End. Another lived at Nancledry Bottoms, where, within recent years, traces of the mud walls of his house used to be shown to visitors.\*

A family of cannibals are said to have been arrested in the year 1460 at Angus. They were burnt except one small child, who, with incredible barbarity, was kept till it was nine years old, and then suffered the same fate.†

No evidence is available as to whether these supposed instances of habitual cannibalism were survivals of or, on the other hand, reversions to the cannibalism that is known to have been prevalent in Scotland less than two thousand years ago.

In the year 781 Charlemagne forced a code of laws on the Saxons in which cannibalism was made a capital offence.‡

To this summary of the relics of cannibalism in Europe might be added an account of the many fairy stories and folk tales in which cannibalism is mentioned. But it will be sufficient for our purpose to point out the interesting fact that children seem to have no dislike of such stories. They enjoy the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, in which the giant says that he smells the blood of an Englishman and "be he alive or be he dead. I'll grind his bones to make my bread." Stories of this kind, in which the hero escapes from someone who wishes to eat him, are, according to J. A. MacCulloch, to be found "in countless variants

\* *Popular Romances of the West of England*, by R. Hunt (Chatto & Windus, 1903), p. 53.

† *Rogues Walk Here*, by W. Roughead, 1934.

‡ *Charlemagne*, by C. E. Russel, 1931.

in European, Lapp, Kirghis, Persian, Karen, Ainu, Eskimo, Malagasy, East African, American Indian, and Melanesian forms."

That legends of cannibalism in Europe have a basis in fact is proved by several discoveries of remains of cannibal feasts dating from prehistoric times. In a cave on the island of Palmaria in the Gulf of Spezzia, broken and cut human bones were found, some of which show signs of being scorched by fire and which are considered to afford clear evidence of cannibalism. The deposit containing these bones is of Neolithic Age. Bronze Age and Iron Age deposits have yielded similar evidence. In an Aurignacian deposit in Moravia a human thigh-bone has been found on which were cuts appearing as if made by a flint knife when scraping off the flesh. Charred human bones from a deposit at Krapina in Austria have been regarded as evidence of cannibalism in the Mousterian period. Yet more demonstrative evidence of Mousterian cannibalism has been discovered by Mr. Reid Moir at Ipswich.

This evidence of palæolithic cannibalism points to the possibility that the custom began before the coming of organized war. Possibly, however, these few instances may have been of cannibalism due to famine. It is also possible that the eating of enemies began, not as a custom of war, but as a sequel to fights between individuals.

## CHAPTER V

### FRENZIED FIGHTING AND HEAD-HUNTING

A STRIKING instance of habitual frenzy in fighting is that of the "Berserkers" of Scandinavia. These men, on approaching an enemy, used to be seized with a frenzy of rage, during which they would bite their shields and then throw them away. The name Berserker means "without shirt" (serk is shirt), a name given to these warriors owing to their habit of stripping for a fight. Of one family of Berserk brothers it is related that if, when on their ship, they felt the Berserker rage coming on, they would go ashore and wrestle with rocks and trees to relieve their feelings. Of one Berserk it is recorded that it was his custom, when leaving a party, to challenge everyone present to a fight as a way of saying adieu.

It has been suggested in Chapter II that biting their shields was a substitute for an earlier practice of biting the enemy. A few instances of use of the teeth in fighting in modern times are known.

In the town of Baku two massacres took place during the Great War. On the first occasion Armenians massacred Mahomedans. When, later on, the place was captured by a Turkish army, it was the turn of Mahomedans to massacre Armenians. The slaughter was carried out, not by Turks, but by some troops who had been recruited in the neighbourhood. One division of these troops is said to have developed the revolting practice of biting through the throats of their victims. They drank the blood, and are even described as bathing in it.\* The frame of

\* *Blood and Oil in the Caucasus*, by Essad-Bey (Nash and Grayson, 1930), pp. 88 and 247.

mind that would enjoy such behaviour may appear to us as almost inconceivable. But that is no proof that it did not occur. It would not be inconceivable to the clergyman who, in England and in the nineteenth century, said in a sermon that "God will crush their blood out and make it fly, so that it will sprinkle his garment and stain all his raiment." \* Neither would it appear inconceivable to those of the inhabitants of Paris who, during the French Revolution, are said to have torn out and eaten the hearts of their victims.

The earliest wars of which we have record seem to have consisted of outbursts of frenzied desire to kill men, women, and children of another community.

The Israelites, at the commencement of their conquest of Palestine, were in the habit of destroying not only human beings, but also the cattle—"everything that breathed"—in each of the cities they captured. The Tartars, after taking a city and slaying the inhabitants, would go away and next day send back a surprise party to discover and kill any possible survivors. In such wars objects that might be valuable loot were recklessly destroyed. Tacitus informs us that the Hermanduri, a German tribe, having conquered the Chatti in battle, sacrificed the whole of the hostile army, "horses and men and all," to their gods.

That the desire to kill that inspired such wars was not accompanied by any lasting hatred is shown by instances in which, after this desire had been satiated, kindness was shown to the survivors. Two examples, may be quoted.

The first is an apparent instance of Frazer's supposed blood-frenzy. In the Bible, in Judges xix. 29, there is an account of the body of a woman who had been outraged and murdered, being cut up into twelve pieces and sent "into all the coasts of Israel" as a call for revenge against the

\* *Sermons*, by Jonathan Edwards (London, 1817), Vol. VII, p. 499, quoted by P. Dearmer in *The Legend of Hell* (Cassell & Co., 1929).

culprits.\* The call succeeded so well that all the women and nearly all of the men of the tribe of Benjamin that had harboured the murderers were slain. After the rage of battle had passed off, the elders of Israel set about finding wives for the surviving Benjamites, in order that, as they said, "a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel." This they did by massacring all the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead except the unmarried girls. Their excuse for so doing was that no representatives had come from this place to the conference that had been held to consider the murder of the woman.

Another instance is recorded from China. An eye-witness account of the massacre that took place on the capture of the city of Yang Chou-fu by the Manchus in the year 1685 has been preserved. After the slaughter had gone on for about six days, during which nearly a million persons had been killed, the conquerors took pity on the few survivors and provided them with food.

Customs resulting from various cave-man influences often undergo changes in the course of time. This we have seen is due to gradual changes in the desires by which such customs are prompted. This appears to have happened also with the desire for war. What we suppose to have been its original motive—namely, the desire to take the property of others or to protect one's own—has sometimes, in the course of ages, gone into the background, and war has been carried on sometimes for love of slaughter, as in the above instances, at others for love of combat for its own sake, or for other reasons.

The custom of war having once been established, all kinds of excuses have been found for indulging it. In Europe there once existed a custom of waging private war. During the prevalence of the feudal system, each nobleman had the right to wage war on any other nobleman against whom he had a grievance. Such private wars sometimes survived the feudal form of society.

It will be of interest to consider instances.

\* A similar means of calling for aid in taking revenge exists among Bedouin tribes at the present day, according to C. S. Coon (*Measuring Ethiopia and Flight into Arabia*; Jonathan Cape, 1936, p. 231).

Some time in the fourteenth century, the daughter of Sir Alexander Seton, a Scotch nobleman, had several suitors. When her choice fell on one of them, by name Alan de Wyntoun, he was at once attacked by his rivals. The fighting that ensued was remembered as "The Wyntoun's War." It is said that it caused "more than a hundred ploughs to be set aside from labour."

Some years later another member of the family to which this lady belonged, Lord Seton of Fyvie Castle, while on a voyage to France, was robbed by some Flemmings of Dunkirk. Angered by the insult, he bought a ship, fitted her out lavishly with engines of war and also with flags and streamers of "red silk semé with crescents of gold," and set out on a voyage of retaliation. He thereby "gat sindry revengis of the said Flemmingis and slew dyuers of thame." He carried on this war for several years with such energy that he seriously impoverished his estate.\* The incident illustrates one of the illogical features of war, dating no doubt from the earliest blood-feud—namely, the desire to get revenge for an injury, not by punishing the guilty individuals, but by killing members of their race.

Private war seems to have been followed even more assiduously in Ireland than in Scotland. The writer of a report to King Henry VIII, dated A.D. 1515, dealing with the condition of Ireland, after describing how the regions inhabited by the King's Irish enemies are ruled by more than sixty Chief Captains under whom are many petty Captains, all of whom wage war with one another continually, goes on to quote an inquiry made by Saint Bridget of an angel—"Of what Christian land are most souls damned?" The heavenly visitor answered, "Ireland, for there is a most continual war, root of hate and envy and vices contrary to charity." The angel also showed her the Irish souls falling into hell "as thick as any hail-shower."†

There are good grounds for suspecting that love of fighting, both in the instances just quoted and elsewhere, has been a more potent source of war than the desire for loot or revenge. Darwin in his *Voyage of the Beagle* relates how a Maori chief was once nearly persuaded to refrain from war with a neighbour by the exhortations of a

\* *Fyvie Castle*, by A. W. M. Stirling (John Murray, 1928).

† *The O'Dwyers of Kilnamanagh*, by Sir Michael O'Dwyer (John Murray, 1933), p. 65.



missionary. Suddenly, however, he remembered that he had a barrel of gunpowder that was in bad condition and that could not keep much longer. That settled the matter. War was declared. The idea of allowing so much gunpowder to spoil without taking the chance of using it was not to be thought of.

It may be suggested that such love of combat as exists to-day in Great Britain is amply satisfied by watching a game of football. In the past this game was yet more suited for this purpose than it is to-day. The disorder that it used to cause was probably one of the reasons why it was forbidden by Edward II in the year 1314. Both Henry VIII and Elizabeth enacted laws against it. In 1531 Sir Thomas Elyot wrote of football that it is "nothing but beastely fury and extreme violence, whereof proceedeth hurte and consequently rancour do remayne with them that be wounded." Stubbes, in 1583, declared it to be productive of "envy, rancour, and malice, and sometimes murther, brawling, homicide, and great effusion of blood." \* Within the memory of living man, boys watching a game of football at Blackheath used to keep up a monotonous chant of "Break their legs; break their legs." †

In Ireland in antiquity, and in certain islands in Torres Straits at the present time, heads of enemies are used as footballs.‡ Whether this method of insulting a slain enemy had anything to do with the game is an open question.

The wisdom of playing international football matches, in view of the ill-feeling they may produce, has been questioned by Mr. F. M. Carruthers, the sporting corre-

\* *Two Thousand Years of London*, by C. Whitaker-Wilson (Methuen, 1933), p. 98.

† So stated in a letter to *The Times* of October 21, 1935, from Mr. F. D. Snook.

‡ So stated in article, "Cannibalism," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. See also *Literary History of Ireland*, by D. Hyde, p. 352.

spondent of the *Daily Mail*. He would prefer to forbid such matches until "there is a better understanding of the methods which may and may not be employed." The occasion of his expressing this opinion was an England *versus* Italy match which was played on November 14, 1934, and which resulted in nearly all the English team being hurt. On the other hand, a football match played against a German team in London on December 4, 1935, was an occasion of expressions of goodwill and esteem on either side.

The custom of head-hunting affords evidence of ferocious and, as we shall see in some instances, of frenzied fighting.

Certain tribes in Assam and in the Malay Archipelago require enemy heads as charms to ensure good crops, or as a means of acquiring courage or other qualities of an enemy, or to gain protection from his ghost. Such excuses for head-hunting are, however, exceptional. They certainly are not original, for it is impossible seriously to maintain that such diverse ends were ever sought to be achieved by one and the same means.

Usually the facts of the case indicate that collecting enemy heads is a custom inspired by hatred and ferocity. It was no fertility cult that led Malcolm II, King of Scotland (1005-1034), to have the heads of his Danish enemies built into the walls of the church of St. Mortlach in the town of Keith. Neither had Ala-ud-Din Kilji any such motive when, in the year 1303, he buried the heads of 8,000 Mogul prisoners in the walls and foundations of his Golden Palace at Delhi.\* Salome had no wish to acquire the virtues of John the Baptist when she asked for his head on a charger.

Head-hunting appears to exist, or to have existed, in two distinct forms: first, in connection with well-developed fighting habits, as a symptom of ferocity and

\* It would be wise to regard this figure as an estimate made by someone who wished to magnify the glory of his king.

hatred, and, secondly, among peoples whose fighting is almost confined to ambushes and raids. In the former class the heads are often carried in triumphal processions. For instance, English witnesses have left a record of the disagreeable impression made by the sight of 20,000 Tartar heads mounted on long spears, being carried in triumph when Shah Abbas of Persia (1557-1628) came home from a war.\* Frequently also the skulls of enemies are made into drinking-cups. In the second class the skulls are often stuck up on posts and may be regarded as charms, or sometimes the enemy heads are supposed to be accompanied by their ghosts, who become friends of their captors.

The following instance of the use of the skull as a drinking-cup is related in detail, as the story aptly illustrates the frame of mind involved in such customs.

In the year 567 or thereabouts, Alboin, a Lombard prince, demanded in marriage Rosamund, daughter of Cunimund, the king of the Gepidæ. He was refused. A war followed in which the Gepidæ were nearly exterminated. Alboin killed the king with his own hand and had his skull fashioned into a drinking-cup. The marriage was then solemnized.

Some years later, at a public feast, Alboin had this cup filled with wine and sent it to his wife, with an insulting message, bidding her drink from her father's skull. She did so, but vowed revenge. Having acquired a lover, she instigated him to murder her husband. The deed was carried out in her presence and with her help. Afterwards, having received a tempting offer of marriage, she found it necessary to dispose of this lover. She therefore handed him a cup of poison as he was getting out of his bath. He took a drink of it, but, recognizing its nature, he forced her at the dagger's point to drain the cup.

\* *Anthony Sherley*, by E. Denison Ross (Routledge, 1933), p. 154.

Gibbon accepted this story without hesitation, but a recent writer has stated that it seems improbable that Alboin would make a drinking-cup out of the skull of his father-in-law. This expression of opinion has all the appearance of being an instance of the too-frequent tendency to whitewash historical characters. The story, perhaps, appears to the writer as improbable because he himself and his friends would prefer drinking-cups made out of other materials. Such a cup, he says, if made, would be used at "solemn" banquets. How does he know that the banquet in question was solemn? Apparently the incident would appear less repulsive to him if it happened on a solemn occasion, partaking perhaps of the nature of a religious ceremony. But it is clear from Gibbon's account that the banquet in question was not solemn, but drunken. As for the story being improbable, this writer overlooks the fact that Alboin's ancestors came from Scandinavia, where drinking from enemy skulls was a custom constantly observed. Even to-day in Scandinavia, when drinking anyone's health, as you raise your glass you say the word "skal," thereby recalling the time when drinking a man's health meant drinking with him out of an enemy skull. Further, the same word seems once to have been used in this sense in England, for an old writer tells us that "Drinking the king's skole meant the drinking of his cup in honour of him." \* The historian Paulus Diaconus, who lived some two hundred years after Alboin's time, relates that once when he was present at a banquet at Court, the subject of Alboin's deeds having been mentioned, King Ratchis sent for this actual skull and showed it to his guests.

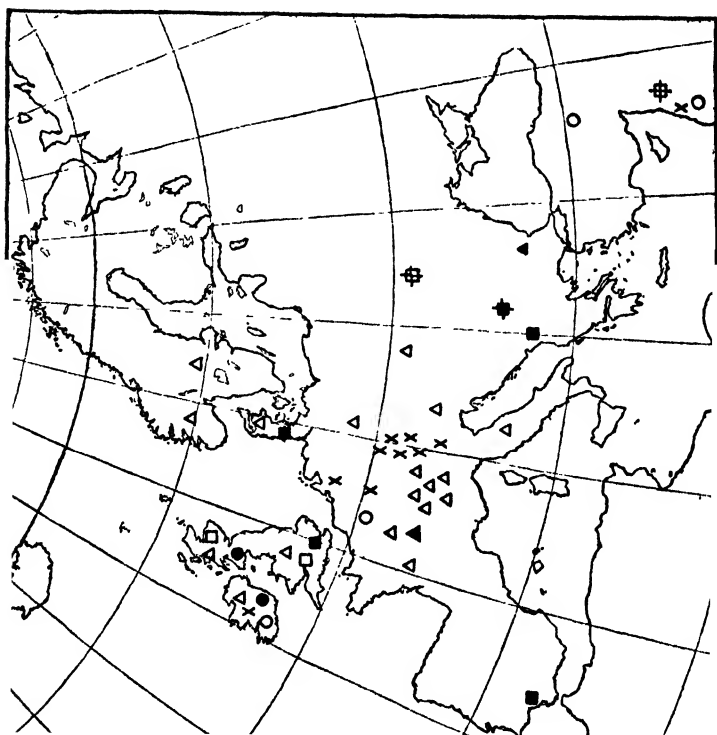
In the past the making of drinking-cups from human skulls has been a widespread custom, as is indicated on the map (Fig. 3). Even so late as the year 811, the skull

\* Quoted in *The Hand of Destiny*, by C. J. S. Thompson (Rider & Co., 1932), p. 265.

FIG. 3.—RECORDS OF HEAD-HUNTING AND USE OF SKULLS AS DRINKING CUPS IN EUROPE.

Symbols black all over for modern and mediæval occurrences. Symbols in outline for earlier records.

- Heads of enemies or criminals mounted on stakes.
- ⬤ Heads built into heaps.
- Heads brought home in triumph.
- ▲ Drinking from skulls of enemies as gesture of hatred.
- × Drinking from skulls of saints to get a blessing, etc.



of the Emperor Nicephorus was made into a drinking-cup after his defeat by the Huns in Bulgaria. The custom had already come into existence in palæolithic times. A skull thus fashioned from this epoch has been discovered in Moravia. Several of neolithic date are known from Switzerland and other localities. Philological evidence justifies the suspicion that the custom has been of yet wider distribution than is shown on the map.\*

The custom probably originated as part of the triumph of early man over his enemies rather than as any attempt to acquire their qualities. Alboin made the cup from Cunimund's skull as part of his vengeance and sent it to his wife to drink out of it, not that she should acquire her father's virtues, but as an insult. The inhabitants of Celebes drink from such cups to allay their blood-frenzy. The Scythians who made such cups showed no respect whatever for their dead enemies, and there is no reason for suspecting that they hoped to acquire their qualities.

It is advisable now to record some facts about head-hunting as met with in races whose fighting habits are well developed.

In an early Irish saga, the hero, Conall Cernach, is represented as saying, "I swear by the oath that my people swear; since the day when I first took a javelin in my hand, it did not often happen to me that I was without the head of a Connaught man under my head as a pillow when I slept." Either the writer of this saga believed that Conall Cernach used these words, or he thought that such boasting coming from the hero would please his readers.

In Montenegro, the decoration of towers with heads of Turks attracted the attention of an English visitor in the year 1840. The inhabitants at first demurred to his suggestion that the custom should be ended, on the ground that so doing might be regarded by the Turks as a sign of weakness. But at length they were persuaded and the custom gradually fell into disuse.† Whatever arguments this English visitor employed we may safely conclude that they would have failed

\* *A Spell of Words*, by L. Eckenstein (Favill Press, 1932), p. 31.

† *Dalmatia*, by G. Rhodes (Stanley Paul, London, 1931), p. 153.

in their object if the Montenegrins had then the same degree of ferocity as their ancestors who began the custom.

A pyramid of human skulls is said to have been erected, in Serbia, presumably by the Turks, in about the year 1806.\* The collecting of heads on a battlefield in Leinster is said to have occurred as late as the year 1534. The Moss Troopers of the Scottish Marches used to bring home heads of enemies tied to their saddle-bows. In early legislation a tendency to treat a criminal as an enemy may sometimes be noted. Hence the placing of heads of criminals on spikes on old London Bridge and on Temple Bar may be a relic of or derived from this custom, although perhaps retained as a warning to malefactors. Half a dozen skulls found in a lake village at Glastonbury in Western England are supposed to have been those of enemies, as one of them was still spiked on to a stake.

Many instances of collection of enemy heads are recorded in history. The Assyrians and Mongols used to make pyramids of the heads of the slain. Esarhaddon (661-668 B.C.), on capturing a city, made its nobles march in procession with the heads of their late rulers hanging from their necks. In the Bible we read that, when the seventy sons of Ahab had been slaughtered, their heads were brought in baskets and "laid in two heaps at the entering in of the gate" (2 Kings x. 8). The Celts, after a battle, used to collect enemy heads in heaps. With the Persians and Turks enemy heads were sent as presents to their kings. The Gauls had a similar custom. In a history of the First Crusade there is mention of four horse-loads of Turkish heads.

Let us now go on to consider briefly head-hunting by those races whose warfare consists generally of ambuscades. With such races, the bringing home of the heads is sometimes, or perhaps usually, the occasion of frenzied rejoicing. In this state of excitement the warriors sometimes bite or otherwise insult their trophies. Even with those tribes with whom head-hunting has assumed the form of a fertility cult, some evidence is available that the taking of heads is associated with ideas of manhood and bravery.

In Papua, before the advent of the British, the only

\* *Old and Odd Memories*, by L. A. Tolemache (Edwin Arnold, 1908).

known way of making love to a girl was to murder a man and bring back his head and present it to her. When this mode of courtship was put a stop to, the effect on society was deplorable, for the young men "could produce no socially recognized certificate of courage which would lead their women to love them." The remedy adopted by the authorities was to persuade the girls to accept the head of a boar in place of that of a man as a proof of courage and manhood.\* Thus a custom depending on a cave-man influence was mastered by treatment of a kind resembling the deflecting of an instinct into a harmless channel. The fact that it could be thus deflected affords a proof that the desire of the girls that their suitors should bring them heads was a true desire for proof of courage, and was not, as has been suggested in the case of the Naga tribe, connected with the idea that the possession of the head would increase their chance of getting children.

The inhabitants of Formosa indulged in head-hunting partly to get trophies and partly to impress their women folk.

Among the Ibans of Borneo a girl will sometimes taunt her lover by suggesting that he has not been brave enough to bring home a head, but in this instance so doing is not an indispensable prelude to marriage.

In Luzon in the Philippines some of the tribes are known to keep a regular debtor and creditor account of heads got by and taken from their neighbours, and "periodical expeditions are organized by the young men to present the bride's father with as many grim trophies as possible in proof of their prowess, the victims being usually taken by surprise."†

With the ancient inhabitants of Sumatra, according to Pritchard, human heads served as currency, and no other currency there existed. Within recent times, the inhabitants of Samanka in Sumatra have been accustomed to atone for their faults by offering the heads of strangers to their chiefs.‡

It is probable that some writers have accepted with

\* *Social Psychology*, by R. H. Thouless (University Tutorial Press, 1925), p. 149.

† *Man, Past and Present*, by A. H. Keane (Cambridge University Press, 1899), p. 166.

‡ *The Natural History of Man*, by J. C. Pritchard, 1845.



undue confidence the asserted connection between head-hunting and fertility rites. Rutter made enquiries on this subject from chiefs in Northern Borneo. They denied that the raids had any religious significance. They said that they were carried out simply as vendettas or to acquire reputation for bravery and thereby to obtain favour with women. A raid would be planned to take place after the crops had been planted because that was the time when the men had leisure.\* There was no further connection between crop-planting and head-hunting in this particular case. Perhaps in other instances such accidental association in point of time between head-hunting and planting once existed, and led to the belief that head-hunting favoured crops, and at length to the idea that heads, being proofs of a successful raid, were the charms that caused fertility.

Head-hunting as it occurs among people of well-developed fighting habits has, as we have seen, the appearance of being an expression of hatred of enemies or of triumph over them. No further source of the practice need be looked for.

As regards head-hunting by races whose fighting is usually confined to raids and ambushes, another suggestion may be made. In these instances, bringing home the heads is often accompanied by scenes of wild excitement. This leads to biting of the heads by villagers in Central Celebes and also by the Ibans of Borneo. Elsewhere captured heads are subjected to other indignities. It may be suggested that such behaviour is a modified form of frenzied hand-to-hand fighting in which the ancestors of these head-hunters used to indulge. Having lost their appetite for fighting on the field of battle, the only way in which they could indulge their desire for frenzied treatment of an enemy was to get enemy heads by

\* *The Pagans of North Borneo*, by Owen Rutter (Hutchinson & Co., 1929).

ambuscade and, having brought them home, to ill-treat them in the safety of their villages. The fact that the biting of the heads is not confined to the actual fighters on such occasions, and also the fact that the arms of the fighters may be bitten by their women folk if they fail to bring back with them the expected trophies, are facts that agree with the view that these customs arose from a desire to bite that is connected with frenzied fighting.

In the list of persistent customs given in Chapter I, mention is made of the fact that a counterpart custom exists to that of making a drinking-cup from an enemy skull. This counterpart custom consists in drinking from the skull of a saint either to get a blessing or to cure a disease. In the Middle Ages many instances of this custom were recorded in Bavaria. The following are examples.

A visitor to Neuss in 1465 related that "he saw in the church a costly coffin; therein lay the dear holy saint Quirinus, and we saw his skull and therefrom they gave us a drink."

The monastery of Ansbach, whose charter was given it by Charlemagne in the year A.D. 787, was founded in memory of Saint Gumbertus. The heathen Wends who lived in the neighbourhood were allowed to bring their sick to drink from his skull.

The custom seems also to have existed in Jerusalem. A pilgrim relates how in a nunnery there he saw the skull of the martyr Theodota, from which people used to drink "pro benedictione." \*

On two occasions, in conversation, very definite statements have been made to me that the custom of drinking from the skulls of saints was once prevalent in Ireland. It is possible that this custom once existed in England, as in mediæval times a skull of St. Petronilla was kept at

\* *The Jew and Human Sacrifice*, by H. L. Strack (Cope & Fenwick, 1909), p. 79.

Bury St. Edmunds and used for curing fevers. How it was used is not known.\*

We have seen that it is likely that the custom of partaking of the blood and flesh of friends did not precede but followed the custom of treating the bodies of enemies in the same way. It is yet more probable that drinking from the skulls of saints succeeded the custom of drinking from the skulls of enemies.

The practice of head-hunting appears to have given rise to the portrayal of decapitated human heads in ancient art. The Indian goddess Kali is always shown wearing a necklace of human heads. A statue from Yucatan shows two human heads hanging from the girdle.† A sculpture found in a burial mound in Guatemala shows a human head with a vulture sitting on it and engaged in picking out the eyes.‡ I refrain from speculating as to the source of the cherub, a winged head lacking a neck, occasionally to be found in allegorical paintings.

\* *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, by G. Baskerville (Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 23.

† *The Temple of the Warriors*, by E. H. Morris (Scribners, 1931).

‡ Reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* of December 24, 1932.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TREATMENT OF THE VANQUISHED IN WAR

ANY detailed account of the usual fate of war prisoners among savage races of to-day and among our savage ancestors in the past would be as unpleasant for me to write as it would be for my readers to read. In view of the suggestion made in Chapter II that the torturing to death of war prisoners may have been the chief source of the practice of human sacrifice, it does not seem advisable to dismiss the subject summarily. It is therefore my intention to describe certain instances in which some accessory interest may divert attention from the disagreeableness of the subject. This chapter accordingly falls into three sections. The first summarizes the evidence that skins of Danish prisoners used to be nailed to church doors in England. The second part contains a criticism of the practice of whitewashing historical characters, illustrated by instances in which attempts have been made to minimize their cruelty. The third part of the chapter contains a brief reference to the amelioration of the cruelty instinct.

#### 1. *The Flaying of Danish Prisoners in England*

The following is an extract from a description, dating from 1710, of the church of Copford in Essex :—

“The doors of this church are much adorned with flourished Iron-work, underneath which is a sort of skin taken notice of in the year 1690, when an old man at Colchester, hearing Copford mentioned, said, that in his

young time, he heard his Master say that he had read in an old history that the Church of *Copford* was robbed by Danes, and their skins nailed to the doors, upon which some gentlemen, being curious, went thither and found a sort of tanned skin, thicker than parchment, which is supposed to be human skin, nailed to the door of the said Church, underneath the said Iron-Work, some of which skin is still to be seen." \*

A specimen of this skin was examined by the microscopist Quekett, in about the year 1848, and found to be human. A piece of it is now in the museum at Colchester. Another piece, which was found under the lock of the door in 1881, is preserved in the vestry of the church.

An account dating from 1778 of the church of Hadstock in Essex records that "the north door of the Church is said to have been covered with the skin of a Danish king, nailed on with many hundreds of nails. Only small bits of the skin remain round the nails which is extremely hard." †

Sir Harry Englefield laid before the Society of Antiquaries, in 1789, a piece of this skin and a plate of iron from the door underneath which this relic had been found. This fragment is now in the Saffron Walden Museum.‡

The church of East Thurrock, also in Essex, bore a similar trophy. It was found under a plate of iron a foot square attached to the door. This skin, according to local tradition, was of a man who had come up the river and robbed the church and who was caught and flayed alive. He was probably a Dane. This skin was also found to be human by Quekett.§

\* *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense*, by R. Newcourt (London, 1710), Vol. II, p. 191.

† *History and Antiquities of Essex*, by P. Morant (London, 1778), Vol. II, p. 543.

‡ "Some Notes on the Tradition of Flaying," by Albert May, *Archæological Journal*, Vol. V, 1848, p. 185.

§ "Notes on Danes' Skins," by H. St. George Gray, *Saga Book of the Viking Club* (1906-1907), Vol. V, p. 221.

Stillingfleet Church, Yorkshire, has a south door dating from the eleventh century covered with ornamental iron work which includes the outline of a Norse ship. The skin of a Dane is said to have been attached to it.

Dart, in his description of Westminster Abbey, dated 1723, asserted that one of the doors of the "revestry" was lined with skin-like parchment and driven full of nails. "These skins," he says, "they, by tradition tell us, were some skins of the Danes, tann'd and given here as a memorial of our delivery from them." \*

Mr. L. E. Tanner, Keeper of the Muniments of Westminster Abbey, informs me that traces of human skin still exist on a door leading from the vestibule of the Chapter House to the Chapel of the Pyx. This skin was examined by Quekett and found by him to be that of a fair-haired person. There is no evidence, according to Mr. Tanner, besides tradition, as to the source of this skin. There is, however, another tradition to the effect that it was of a person who had robbed the Treasury in the year 1303.

Pepys wrote in his Diary for April 10, 1661: "To Rochester, and there saw the cathedral . . . observing the great doors of the church, as they say, covered with the skins of the Danes."

Another instance of flaying in Great Britain may be mentioned. Hugo de Cressingham, Chief Justice Itinerant in the North of England, was caught by the Scots and flayed by them at Strivelyn in the year 1296.

Punishments mentioned in Anglo-Saxon law include such phrases as "corium perdere" and "cute privare," but the culprit, having been thus condemned, was generally offered the choice of paying a fine instead of being skinned. This fine was known as "hyd-gild"—that is, "skin-money." How often has one used the phrase "to save

\* *History of Westminster Abbey*, by Dart, Vol. I, Book I, p. 14.

one's skin " without realizing that it either had or needed an explanation !

At that time punishment was regarded as an act of vengeance on the criminal. The criminal had acted as an enemy. It was therefore natural that he should either be treated as such, or that a threat to that effect should be made. For more serious crimes it appears that the flaying was actually carried out. For sacrilege the punishment of flaying remained in force long after the time of the Danish invasions. Worcester Cathedral was completed in the year 1386. Some time after this date a thief stole the sanctus bell from its high altar. He was caught and skinned, and his skin was attached to the cathedral door. According to local tradition, the man was skinned alive. A piece of this skin was examined by Quekett, who found on it hairs that were undoubtedly human. A sample of this skin is now in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

History books tell us that Richard Cœur de Lion, when dying, sent for the man who had shot him and magnanimously forgave him. This statement aptly illustrates the way in which pleasant facts are apt to take precedence over unpleasant facts in accounts of historical personages. Richard had been shot by an archer while besieging a small castle owing to a petty quarrel about some treasure trove. When he found he was dying, Richard gave orders that every member of the garrison was to be hanged except the man who had shot him, who was to be brought before him for special treatment. When the man arrived, he defended himself with adroitness, pointing out that Richard in his wars had killed so many of this man's relations that the deed was legitimate blood-revenge. Richard saw the point and gave orders that the man was to be treated mercifully. Nevertheless, by order of the commander of the king's mercenaries, the unfortunate man was skinned alive. This punishment was in accordance with the then prevalent law and practice. It was laid down in the laws of Henry I that if any man slay his Lord there shall be no redemption—" *nullo modo se redimeat, sed de comacione [scalping], vel excoriacione, severa gentium animadversione dempnetur.*"

In later ages the idea of skinning an enemy survived in England in a modified form. In 1745 Prince Charlie's forces went through Leek in Staffordshire both in their advance and in their retreat. On this latter occasion some of the Highlanders behaved badly. One was caught and, after being killed, was skinned. The skin is said to have been kept for a long time.\*

It is a surprising fact that traces of this barbarous custom survived into the comparative respectability of the nineteenth century.

In the year 1828, William Corder, having been convicted of the murder of Maria Marten at the Red Barn, Polstead, Essex, was sentenced to be taken to the prison and "that you there be hanged by the neck until you are dead; and that your body shall afterwards be dissected and anatomised: and may the Lord God Almighty, of his infinite goodness, have mercy on your soul." After the execution, the county surgeon is said to have dissected away part of the skin, and in this condition the body was seen by many thousands of persons "of both sexes and some of high respectability." A book containing an account of the murder was bound in part of the culprit's skin, and is now in the library of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology, which is kept in the Moyses Hall Museum at Bury St. Edmunds. Other parts of the skin, which had been tanned, were given away to people in the town, some of whom had the curiosity to taste them, as they explained, in order to assure themselves that they resembled ordinary leather.† It would be of interest to know more particularly why they were thus inquisitive, and whether they had had any experience of the taste of leather from other than human sources.

Other instances are known of books being bound in the skin of murderers. The latest occasion was in the year 1843.‡

The practice of skinning an enemy was not confined to the Anglo-Saxons. In the past it has occurred in many countries, including Persia, India, China, America, Africa, and Australia. An Assyrian bas-relief shows prisoners being flayed. They are shown as tied down, a detail that indicates that they were alive at the time. A surviving vestige of the custom is recorded as occurring in an annual festival at Viza, a town in Thrace. This festival includes a drama which is regarded by Frazer as a survival of the human sacrifices once

\* *Derby and the Forty-five*, by L. Eardley-Simpson, p. 225.

† *The East Anglian Notes and Queries*, New Series, Vol. I, 1885-6), p. 295.

‡ *Notes and Queries*, 10th Series, Vol. I, p. 352.



offered in that country to Dionysus. This drama includes a fight in which one of the masqueraders is shot with a bow and falls down pretending to be dead. His opponent thereupon feigns to skin him with a knife.\*

## *2. Instances of Whitewashing of Historical Characters*

The widespread tendency to represent historical characters in as favourable a light as possible is commonly described as historians' whitewash. This is not applied indiscriminately, but is reserved by writers for their special protégés. Sometimes it results in attempts to under-estimate or minimize the cruelty of which such characters have been guilty.

The first instance we will consider relates to the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan. Some time about the beginning of the thirteenth century and somewhere in Asia, he won his first great battle. Seventy hostile chiefs are said to have been captured and to have been boiled alive. A recent biographer doubts this, on the ground that there is "an improbable touch of cruelty in the story." One may fairly doubt the numbers given. Perhaps a much smaller number of rival chiefs were captured. But it is entirely wrong to say that such cruelty was improbable. The ancestors of Genghis Khan were, if possible, yet more brutal. They roasted and ate their prisoners. Genghis Khan also had a strong motive in treating these prisoners in a way that would be talked about, for he was not yet firmly established on his throne, and it was advisable to discourage possible rivals.

Passing on to another instance of cruelty, we may mention the story now current in Western India that the Mahratta national hero Shivaji, on one occasion before starting on a campaign, threw all his wives down a well. He is said to have done so in order to convince his followers that he was confident of finding as many new wives as he

\* *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, p. 27.

wanted in the country he was about to conquer. It is probable that the story is untrue and that it dates from the time of Shivaji, and was told, not because it was meant to be believed or was believed, but as a way of saying that he had full confidence in victory and in getting abundant loot. Thus it may have been used to stimulate recruiting.

But no such scepticism is allowable about stories of Shivaji's ill-treating prisoners from whom he wished to extort money. H. G. Rawlinson in his account of Shivaji says that "the story of Smith, the English merchant, who was taken prisoner, that he saw Shivaji chopping off heads and hands of those who concealed their wealth, must be a gross exaggeration." \* Rawlinson gives no reason or excuse for this scepticism. He might find some excuse for it if he could show any instance of marauding bands in India who have not been guilty of cruelty towards their victims. An example of such cruelty may be quoted. In the year 1817, when the "pax Britannica" was not yet established in Western India, Maratha and Pindari bands of robbers were plundering the country. They used to levy a contribution from every town they captured, backing up their request by torturing the leading inhabitants with "horrible refinement of cruelty." This was no case of exceptional depravity of a few individuals. The numbers of these robber bands were so great that the British Government in India succeeded in bringing their ill deeds to an end only by sending against them an army of 120,000 men.† A few years earlier armed robbers were terrorizing Bengal. In the district of Nuddeah alone it was reported that about seventy persons per month were being tortured to death. The Viceroy, Lord Minto, visited this place, and by hanging a number of the leaders brought these outrages to an end. Previously

\* *Shivaji the Maratha*, by H. G. Rawlinson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1915).

† *British India*, by R. W. Frazer in *Story of the Nations Series* (1898), p. 190.

to the Viceroy's visit, owing to terror, none of the villagers dared to make any complaint or to give any evidence against the miscreants.\*

On turning to Anthony Smith's account of Shivaji's ill-treatment of prisoners, no reason at all appears for regarding it as an exaggeration. Rawlinson's mention of it contains an inaccuracy. He says the hands were chopped off. But it appears that this was not the case. They were cut off by a knife that may have been blunt. Smith gives a detailed and disgusting account of the process at which I have only glanced. Smith relates that on one occasion an old man, a travelling merchant, was brought before Shivaji. He said that he had invested all his property in cloth and, as he had not yet sold any, he had no money, but that Shivaji might take as much of this cloth as he wished. For this fault of not having any money the old man was punished by the loss of his right hand. Smith also gives an account of a young man aiming a blow at Shivaji. He was cut down and killed. Shivaji seems to have been excited at the incident, for, as Smith relates, "There were then about four heads and twenty-four hands cutt of." Smith says that Shivaji's "desire of money is soe great that he spares no barbarous cruelty to extort confessions from his prisoners" and, in consequence, he "at least cuts off one hand, sometimes both."†

Now let us consider another instance. Gibbon appears to be shocked by the story of the Roman Emperor Valerian having been ill-treated after he had been taken prisoner by the Persian King Sapor in A.D. 260. He says that "the truth of it may very fairly be called in question." What is the origin of this scepticism, for which Gibbon

\* *Lord Minto in India*, by the Countess of Minto (Longmans Green, 1880), p. 189.

† This account of Anthony Smith's experiences is printed without comment in *English Records of Shivaji* in the *Shivaji Tercentenary Memorial Series*, published by Shiva Charitra Karalya, Poona, 1931. See pages 78 and 79.

makes no attempt whatever to give a reason? He finds no difficulty in believing that a Lombard king forced his wife to drink out of a cup that had been made from her father's skull, or that the skull of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus was used as a drinking-cup by the Bulgarians, or that Genghis Khan boiled his rivals for the throne. But when it comes to a statement about one of his protégés, a Roman Emperor, having been subjected to indignities, he becomes sceptical.

Let us consider the story of Sapor and Valerian. Some parts of the account are surprising, but yet are accepted by Gibbon. He tells us that the allies of Sapor repeatedly advised him to treat his royal captive generously. Is it not surprising that, at the moment of a great and crushing victory, anyone should venture to advise an oriental ruler to depart from the time-honoured custom of ill-treating captured enemies? Is it not more surprising that anyone should have done so more than once? Is it not still more surprising that Sapor should have any allies at all, in view of the fact that the heads of all the kings who had reigned in the neighbourhood in the time of his father were now safely hanging up in the royal fire-temple at Istakhr, his capital town? If we are to believe in these allies and also in their presumption, why should we find difficulty in believing the detailed account that has come down to us of Valerian having been skinned and of his skin having been painted red and hung up in the same fire-temple?

It has been asserted that the ancient Egyptians were less inhuman in their treatment of war prisoners than contemporary Asiatic races. This may be so, but it does not follow that their conduct in this respect was up to the standard now adopted by civilized races. A description is extant of a Pharaoh returning from a war with seven kings hanging head downwards from the underside of the bow of his state barge. These kings were afterwards

sacrificed. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge asserts that the ancient Egyptians were bloodthirsty and savage in dealing with vanquished enemies.

It is undesirable to extend any further the list of unpleasant facts. It will suffice to state that throughout Europe, Asia, and America, wherever records exist, there is evidence of habitual ill-treatment of captured enemies. Either the prisoners were tortured and killed as an indulgence of the cruelty instinct, or they were put to death in a cruel way as an offering to the gods of war.

### 3. *The Lessening of the Desire to Ill-treat Prisoners*

A less unpleasant aspect of the subject now demands a brief mention. The custom of treating war prisoners with cruelty has fallen into abeyance in many parts of the world. No sufficient explanation of the change is as yet available.

As an instance of this change we may cite the Chippeway Indians of North America, who, in the last century, concluded a treaty with the Sioux, whereby each promised to abstain from their former custom of burning war prisoners alive. During several subsequent wars this agreement has been scrupulously observed.\*

\* *On the Origin of Civilization*, by Sir John Lubbock (Longmans Green, 1882).

## CHAPTER VII

### HUMAN SACRIFICE IN EUROPE

IN our study of the nature of human sacrifice it is advisable to confine our attention to this rite as it has existed in Europe, both because we are interested in its possible effect on the minds of Europeans of to-day, and also because records of human sacrifice for Europe are more extensive than are those of other parts of the world.

For the purpose of this study the following classification of the different kinds of human sacrifice will be employed :

1. Sacrifice of a widow on the death of her husband and sacrifice of slaves on the death of a chief. Such sacrifices have the purpose of providing attendants and companions to the man in his future life. These sacrifices have nothing to do with any attempt to please the deity, or, at any rate, this was so when they were first begun. They are the direct result of belief in a future life, and there is no reason to seek for a further source, as there is with those sacrifices that are carried out to please the deity.

2. Sacrifices in connection with the flow of water. These appear to be magical ceremonies the object of which is directly to influence the course of nature, as opposed to religious ceremonies designed to make an impression on the deity.

3. Sacrifices having the form of cannibal frenzy in the rites of Dionysus.

4. Foundation sacrifices. These have the object of providing spirits to protect the building, or had this object when first begun, and hence are not performed in order to placate the god.

5. Sacrifices in which a direct appeal is made to the deity for help. The help required may be for the benefit of crops or to ward off danger from famine or pestilence or war. But the wish to ensure good crops is by far the most frequently alleged reason. So much is this the case as to suggest that benefit to crops, if not the original cause of human sacrifice, was at least the first advantage believed to accrue from the practice. This can have happened only after our ancestors had begun to raise crops. If the victims were originally prisoners taken from the enemy, then these sacrifices can have begun only after the evolution of that form of war in which prisoners were taken alive.

6. Sacrifice of first-born.

Now let us consider the evidence of the former prevalence of these various kinds of sacrifice in Europe. We shall have to describe historical records of sacrifices, isolated instances of such sacrifices in modern times, and lastly many existing or recently existing customs that appear to be derived from human sacrifice.

*1. Sacrifice of Widows*

The custom of sacrificing widows on the death of their husbands is known to have existed among the Scandinavians, the Slavonians, and the Heruli, a Germanic tribe that once lived on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The practice seems to be completely extinct, and no custom based on such sacrifice has survived in Europe. Such a custom is met with in North America, where, among the Tacullies, the widow is made to lie on the funeral pyre of her husband while the fire is being lit. She is allowed to creep away as soon as the heat is more than she can bear.\* This is the first substitute custom that demands our attention. Such customs are commonly supposed to have the object of deceiving the deity. No such

\* *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. I, p. 474.

explanation fits the present case. The killing of the widow was not a sacrifice to please God: it was done for the convenience of the husband in his future life. For the same purpose slaves may be killed at the grave of a chief or of any man of importance.

Had the practice been maintained owing simply to a belief in its utility, then, when humane feelings rendered the killing of widows and slaves undesirable, reason would have stepped in and brought it to an end. But this did not happen, because, as seems to be the rule in such cases, the repeated observance of the custom had given rise to a desire that was transmitted from one generation to the next. The means of this transmission does not appear to be either by tradition or suggestion or desire to follow existing practice or by ordinary inheritance. We are dealing with a phenomenon the real nature of which, as yet, completely eludes us.

The killing of widows and slaves was originally regarded as useful, and hence may be said to have begun as a result of a reasoning process. But it was continued owing to the presence of this transmitted desire. After this desire had come into existence, the original purpose of the killing must have been forgotten, because of its replacement by substitute ceremonies, such as sacrificing images at the grave, which could not be of the slightest use to the deceased. There is nothing exceptional in such a sequence of events. It is the usual rule with the desires by which persistent customs are maintained that when they are losing their hold they are satisfied by some observance that is a mere parody of their former aim.

## *2. Sacrifices in Connection with the Flow of Water*

In Russia, in the Jaroslav district, according to tradition, millers used to catch any passing stranger and throw him into the mill-pond as a protection against the spring



flood. Traditions of human sacrifice to the water-spirit also exist in Archangel.\*

In 1685 a dam burst at Brunsbüttel, a place near the shores of the North Sea in the extreme west of Germany. Thereupon the inhabitants wished to bury a child alive. It was, however, rescued.†

In 1463 an old beggar was thrown into the water on the occasion of the bursting of a dam on the river Nogat in East Prussia near Elbing. ‡

In 1597 at Delve in Dithmarschen (Schleswig-Holstein), on the bursting of a dam, instead of a human being, a dog was drowned in its breach. This was done as the elders of the locality had declared that "animam quæri" ("a soul was required").§

A very interesting question arises in regard to the above occurrences—namely, as to how the desire for a human victim was kept alive. The bursting of a dam is by no means such a common occurrence that the sacrifice can be properly described as a result of customary usage. Are we to imagine that knowledge of this remedy, so rarely applied, was kept alive by being handed on from father to son, through centuries perhaps, before a chance came of using it? In the case of the widow-sacrifices just considered, what was handed on from one generation to the next was not a belief in its utility, but a desire. This, if it was really a desire, and not a product of reasoning in the individual, could not have been transmitted from one generation to the next by conversation between fathers and sons. This desire behaves as if it were inherited, but we found it preferable to use a non-committal expression, and simply to say that it was transmitted from one

\* *Aberglaube und Strafrecht*, by Aug. Löwenstimm (Berlin, 1897), pp. 8 and 16.

† *The Jew and Human Sacrifice*, by H. L. Strack (Cope & Fenwick, 1909), p. 32.

‡ Löwenstimm, *loc. cit.*, p. 16.

§ Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 32.

generation to the next in some unknown way. A similar description seems suitable in the present case. A reason for this statement is the fact that these water-sacrifices resemble funeral killings in being sometimes replaced by substitute ceremonies. The change from the original ceremony to the substitute and the maintenance of the desire to have recourse to such substitute are facts that are very difficult to explain as resulting from repeated conversations between fathers and sons as to what should be done on the bursting of a dam. The change, therefore, is of theoretical interest. It affords yet another instance of a persistent custom that apparently cannot be due to the effect of tradition or suggestion. The desire persists as if it is an instinct. But it differs from an instinct in important respects. If a name is needed for it, it may be described as a "pseudo-instinct." Its mode of transmission will be discussed in a later chapter.

### 3. *Rites of Dionysus* \*

### 4. *Foundation Sacrifices*

The practice of burying a victim under the foundation of any important building in order to provide a guardian spirit is both ancient and widespread. Instances of this custom have been recorded in Great Britain both in antiquity and in comparatively modern times.

Gortigern, a Welsh chieftain, when building a fortress, was advised by the Druids to sprinkle all over the foundations the blood of a boy whose father was unknown.† The preference for an orphan child was, it may be suggested, to avoid the risk of the sacrifice resulting in a blood-feud.

At Woodhenge in Wiltshire the discovery was made of the skeleton of a child whose skull had been chopped in

\* See next Chapter.

† *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. I, p. 462.

two, and for this reason is supposed to have been killed as a foundation sacrifice.\*

According to Carmichael, a man was buried under a pier built for an English smelting company at Banawe in Argyllshire near Lake Etive. The man's name was Lachlann Ogi. He had lost his senses after having accidentally killed the lady with whom he had eloped. He wandered about the country never speaking to anyone. According to another version of the story he was buried not under the pier, but under the foundations of Banawe House. The date of the pier was 1753. The house was built by the same company.

The same author states that when building the manse of Killtarlity, the masons seized a passing woman and buried her under the foundations.

He also asserts that he knew of a cock being placed "under the wall of a church in one of the Midland counties of England." †

Westermarck quotes a statement to the effect that the inhabitants of the Greek island of Zacynthus (Zante), even at the present day, hold the belief that in order to secure the durability of important buildings it is advisable to kill a man and bury him on the spot.

In many parts of Europe evidence of a former custom of foundation-sacrifice is yielded by substitute ceremonies.

A custom of this kind exists, or has existed in recent years, at Ely in Cambridgeshire. There it has been usual to begin the building of a house by killing a dog and burying it under the foundations. One of my two informants about this custom tells me that his father, when an undergraduate at the nearby university of Cambridge, knew of the custom having been observed in or about the year 1870.

\* *Woodhenge*, by M. E. Cunningham (George Simpson, Devizes, 1929), p. 13.

† *Carmina Gadelica*, by A. Carmichael (Oliver and Boyd, 1928), Vol. II, p. 340. I found the date 1753 in a Scottish Gazetteer.

In Greece nowadays, a cock, a lamb, or a ram may be killed and buried under a foundation stone. But a substitute ceremony of quite another kind also exists in that country and in Rumania and Bulgaria. It consists in taking a measurement of a man's shadow and burying it under the foundations. It is believed that the man whose shadow has been thus treated will die within a year. A degradation of the belief exists in the island of Lesbos, where the builder thinks it enough to throw a stone at the shadow of a passer-by.\*

In Transylvania at the present day a custom exists of burying under a foundation either a bone from a corpse or the skull of an animal. A reason for asserting that this is a relic of a human sacrifice of an earlier time is the fact that the builders in that country have a legend that their predecessors on seeing buildings falling down brought this trouble to an end by burying a woman alive.

In the foundation of old houses in Schleswig-Holstein, horse skulls or bones, or even the bones of the leg of a wild fowl, have occasionally been found—presumably representing foundation sacrifices.†

#### 5. *Sacrifices in which a Direct Appeal is Made to the Deity*

These sacrifices may be described as religious observances. A writer on early European culture refers to, and dismisses them as the "darker side" of the religion of the barbarian invaders of Europe. What right has he to assume that there was a brighter side to balance the darker side of this ancient religion? There is no satisfactory evidence that the worship of the gods of these barbarians had any other effect on conduct than putting enemy prisoners to death by cruel methods. The victims

\* *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, by Frazer, p. 89.

† Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 32.

of one of the gods of Gaul were, in the words of Gudmund Schütte, "rent asunder by the elastic strength of the branches of a bowed down tree. The victims of another were burnt, of another hanged, and of another drowned." Schütte makes no mention of any other religious rite or duty.\* A charitable desire to discover in our ancestors the good qualities that we find in our contemporaries furnishes a reason but not an excuse for supposing that their religion had any brighter side. It is likely that the coming of Christianity was the occasion of a conflict between those who wished to retain and those who wished to abolish the social evil of human sacrifice. In Iceland, in the summer of A.D. 1000, during the discussion as to whether or not Christianity should be accepted, the pagan party wanted to offer to their gods two men from every *fjerding*. In Sweden, at about the same date, King Olav Tyrgvesson told his chieftains that unless they accepted Christianity, he would in future sacrifice them instead of slaves.†

A praiseworthy dislike of the sensational has combined with feelings of good taste to keep in the background any mention of the cruelty with which the human sacrifices of this and other religions were often and perhaps generally carried out. For instance, Dean Milman tells us that the officers of the legions of Varus were slain by their German conquerors "on these horrid altars," thereby giving the idea that the sacrifice was part of a solemn religious ceremony in which the victims were put to death in some comparatively humane manner.‡ But, according to

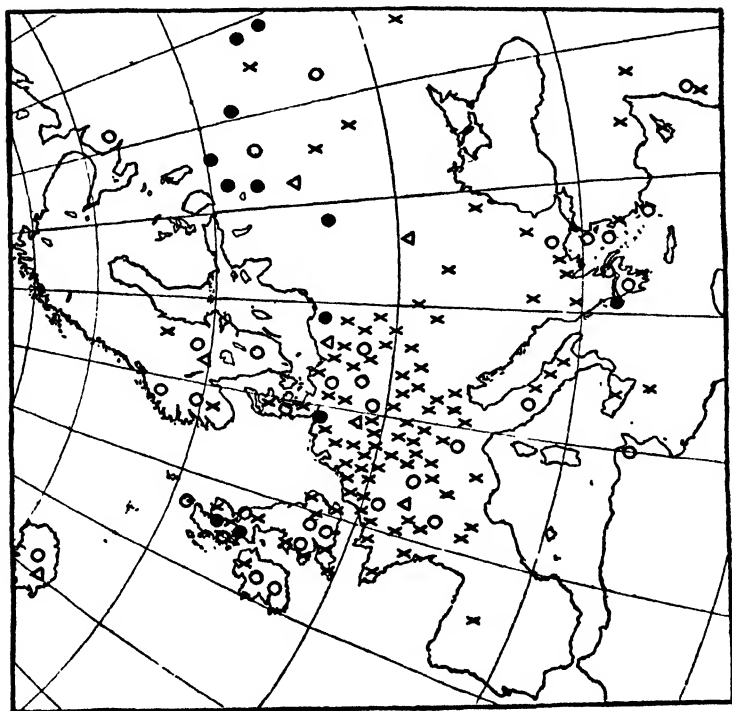
\* *Our Forefathers, the Gothonic Nations*, by Gudmund Schütte (Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 111. See also an article entitled "The Circle and the Cross," by A. H. Allcroft, in the *Archæological Journal*, Vol. XXIX, p. 308 (1922), and *A History of Europe*, by H. A. L. Fisher (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1935), Vol. I, p. 177.

† *Saga of Saints*, by Sigrid Undset (Sheed & Ward, 1934), p. 56.

‡ *History of Latin Christianity*, by H. H. Milman (John Murray, 1883), Vol. I, p. 332.

FIG. 4.—RECORDS OF HUMAN SACRIFICE IN EUROPE.

- Recent occurrences.
- In antiquity.
- x Customs derived from human sacrifice mostly still extant.
- △ Sacrifice of widows or slaves on death of owner.



another authority, no altars were used, and death was inflicted either by crucifixion or by burying alive. In other religions human sacrifice often had a similar character. In Greece the victims were usually scourged before being put to death. In the worship of Dionysus they were torn in pieces. Similar evidence comes from other parts of the world, and makes most disagreeable reading.\*

Evidence of the former prevalence of such sacrifices in Europe is given by many still existing customs, the prevalence of which is indicated in the map (Fig. 4). Midsummer bonfires now or till recently carried out in every country in Europe are, according to Frazer, vestiges of festivals of human sacrifice. In some of these festivals large wickerwork figures used to be carried about and afterwards burnt. Sometimes they contained live animals. Frazer identifies these figures with the wicker cages in which the Druids used to burn their human victims.†

The following are records of human sacrifice in Europe in antiquity. Saint Boniface had to reprimand some Christian soldiers for selling captives to the heathen who wanted victims for their sacrifices. This probably happened in Germany about the year 745. The great Saxon Emperor Henry the Fowler, in the year 926, put an end to human sacrifices that, till then, had been performed every ninth year at a sacred place in Sjaelland in Denmark. Similar sacrifices at nine-year intervals were also stopped by him at about the same date in Upsala and Hlethra in Sweden. Authorities differ as to whether the number of human victims was nine or ninety-nine.‡

That the impulse to perform such sacrifices still persists

\* Examples may be found in several of Frazer's works; for instance, in *The Scapegoat*, Chapter VII, and in *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, p. 238.

† *Balder the Beautiful*, Vol. II, pp. 33 and 38.

‡ Milman, *loc. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 333, and *Die Deutschen Opfergebräuche*, by Dr. Ulrich Jahn (Breslau, 1884), p. 66.

in Russia, or at least has existed there till recent years, is proved by the following facts.

In the year 1831, in the Minsk District, owing to fear of cholera, an attempt was made to bury a priest alive. He asked for time to prepare for death, and thus found a means of escaping.

In the year 1855, owing to cholera, in the village of Okopowitski, a woman was buried alive.

In 1861, owing to fear of an epidemic, in Turuchan in the Jenissei District, a girl was buried alive.

In 1870, in Grjasowez, Wologda District, a human sacrifice occurred at the time of ploughing.

In 1871, owing to fear of cholera, a man was buried alive in Torkatschi village.

In 1881, owing to famine, a girl was strangled by a Samoyede in Nova Zembla.

In 1892, owing to bad harvests and fear of epidemics, a man was sacrificed in a cruel way and partly eaten in Stary-Multan village. This case has already been described in connection with cannibalism.\*

Instances of substitute ceremonies may be added to this list. In the Novogrud District in 1872, owing to fear of cholera, animals were buried alive. In old times in Russia in one form of sacrifice a woman was tied up in a sack with a cat and a hen and then buried. Sometimes the woman was omitted.† This amelioration points to one way in which a human sacrifice may be replaced by sacrifice of an animal. It is obviously possible that the use of a dog in foundation-sacrifices may have thus arisen.

### 6. *The Sacrifice of First-born Children*

This form of sacrifice appears to be an attempt by the priests to indulge their lust of cruelty, in that it caused

\* Strack, *loc. cit.*, p. 40, and Löwenstimm, *loc. cit.*, pp. 9-14.

† *Aberglaube und Strafrecht*, by Aug. Löwenstimm (Berlin, 1897), p. 25. The name is spelt Levenstimm in the British Museum Library Catalogue.



anguish to others besides the victim. In Carthage and other localities on the shores of the Mediterranean, the mother was obliged to witness the sacrifice. She had to caress her child till the moment it was torn from her arms and thrown into the flames.

The Russians used to sacrifice their first-born to the god Perun.

The first-born used to be sacrificed at Mag Slacht in County Cavan in Ireland. This custom is said to have been continued for some time after the introduction of Christianity.\* If this statement is true, it offers a striking illustration of the tenacity with which persistent customs may be followed. The custom of child-sacrifice must have been adhered to with tenacity, because only an overmastering urge could conquer the parental instincts. Such tenacity is also demonstrated by the severity of the punishments with which attempts were made to stop it among the nations of antiquity. For example, the Proconsul Tiberius crucified Carthaginian priests outside their temples in an attempt to stop child-sacrifice. Yet the practice continued secretly up to the time of Tertullian.† Among the Hebrews the death penalty was inflicted for child sacrifice; yet this punishment was insufficient to prevent them from making their children "pass through the fire" in honour of Baal or Moloch.

But in modern times no such tenacity has been shown when civilized races have interfered with human sacrifice among their less civilized subjects. In India, in America, and in the Malay Archipelago, either animals or inanimate substitutes have been more or less readily accepted in place of human victims. The change, in these various instances, is an example of the waning that is usual with persistent customs in the passage of time.

Sir J. G. Frazer has mentioned the possibility that child-

\* Article, "Europe," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

† *The Dying God*, by Frazer, p. 168.

sacrifice began as an extension of the custom of sacrificing the king's son, and that, in places where this form of sacrifice once existed, the king's son used to be sacrificed as a substitute for killing the king himself. But, despite an extensive study of child-sacrifice, he fails to adduce a single instance in which there is evidence of the king's son being sacrificed in mitigation of the king-killing practice.\*

The foregoing list of records of human sacrifice in Europe may appear surprisingly long; but it is by no means exhaustive. The form of human sacrifice connected with the rites of Dionysus will demand another chapter. Both in Europe and in other parts of the world the progress of archæological exploration frequently makes additions to our knowledge of the former wide prevalence of this rite.

A curious parallelism may be noted between survivals of human sacrifice and survivals of cannibalism in Europe. These survivals, in each case, occur in two forms. Either they resemble more or less closely what appears to be the original form of the custom and, if so, occur only in rare and isolated instances. Or, in each case the survivals are derived and elaborated practices having but little resemblance to their originals. Such practices are not confined to individuals; they affect whole communities.

Substituted forms of human sacrifice present a phenomenon of very great interest that demands our further attention.

In a particular instance of an animal being used in place of a human victim, Sir J. G. Frazer has suggested that this substitute ceremony has the appearance of being "a pious and merciful fraud, which palmed off on the deity less precious victims than living men and women."† If this was an isolated occurrence, one might accept this

\* Chapter VI of Frazer's book *The Dying God* is entitled "Sacrifice of the King's Son." It extends to 35 pages. Of these no less than 29 deal with child-sacrifice, which in the great majority of cases had nothing to do with royalty.

† *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, p. 34.

explanation while still regarding it as strange that men should ever have attempted to humbug their gods. But when we find substitute ceremonies in use all over the world, often in the form of the most absurd travesties of the original act of worship, it becomes very difficult to believe that everywhere men made the same discovery—namely, that their gods had this singularly gullible disposition. When the deity demands the sacrifice of a girl, he may be satisfied with the sacrifice of a goat dressed up in girl's clothes. Or there may be, in another sacrifice, a mock execution of the victim to which the appearance of reality is given by the piercing of a bladder full of blood which is concealed in his clothes. Sometimes the deity has to be satisfied with a trivial and harmless cut made on the throat of the pretended victim. Or the priest may serve his god by chopping to pieces an effigy that takes the place of the child or man who used to be immolated in the distant past. As a further instance we may quote the "Beltane Fires" that used to be celebrated in Scotland up to about the middle of the eighteenth century. Every year, on the first of May, a party of young men set fire to tinder by friction of pieces of wood. This fire was then used to light a bonfire. They made a pretence of putting into it one of their number who had been chosen by lot. In some places the victim was compelled to jump three times through the flames. For some time after this ceremony the desire for the pretended sacrifice continued to be indulged, for, so long as the festival was fresh in people's memory, his friends affected to speak of this individual as dead.

An important feature of these mock ceremonies is the fact that they persist for long periods after the religion that gave rise to them has been swept into oblivion. Thus it is obvious that what is transmitted from one generation to the next is a desire. It may have begun as a desire to please God, but after a time what is transmitted is merely

a desire to perform the substitute ceremony. This desire has originated from an amelioration or degradation of a previously existing desire for the real sacrifice. The reason for the original sacrifice must have been forgotten when this change took place. Those sacrifices in which a direct attempt is made to influence the course of Nature may represent the first stage in such forgetting. Good is then expected from the sacrifice itself rather than from any effect the sacrifice might have on the deity.

The desire for the mock sacrifice is not simply a desire to conform to custom, for it was a divergence from custom when it began and, as it changes in the course of time, it is destined to cause other divergences from custom. The means by which these desires are transmitted must at present be left undetermined. We will return to the subject after having considered yet more evidence bearing on the question.

Records of human sacrifice and of mock human sacrifices in Europe shown in the accompanying map (Fig. 4) for the following reasons possibly give an exaggerated idea of the former prevalence of such rites.

Though a desire for a mock human sacrifice may properly be regarded as derived from a desire for a real human sacrifice, it does not follow that every observance that resembles a mock human sacrifice deserves to be so described. We have seen that mock human sacrifices are maintained owing to a desire that comes from the past. Hence, since a mock human sacrifice is regarded as a pleasurable event, it is possible that its occurrence in a public festival may be a copying of a custom indulged in elsewhere, rather than a vestige of a human sacrifice formerly carried out on the spot. Or it might be that a celebration of any event might more or less accidentally come to resemble a mock human sacrifice.

The burning of a human effigy on a fixed date every year may or may not be a relic of a real human sacrifice.

Such burning of a human effigy takes place in nearly every town and village in England on the fifth of November every year. It is not a relic of a human sacrifice, but a memorial of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

In ancient Rome the Vestal Virgins used to throw thirty human effigies made of rushes into the Tiber from the Sublician bridge at an annual festival. It was believed at the time that formerly human beings used to be sacrificed in this way and that this custom was put a stop to by Hercules.\* It is rather difficult to believe that thirty human victims were available for sacrifice every year. It is more likely that on a single occasion the ancient Romans had attacked a neighbouring village and brought back the survivors, thirty in number, and that these were drowned in the Tiber in celebration of the victory. In the next year, when the victory was again commemorated, no prisoners being available, effigies would have to be used. Here again it is possible that a single event gave rise to a custom recalling a real human sacrifice.

In concluding we may mention a supposed instance of a foundation-sacrifice which appears to be based on a singular misinterpretation of a story about Saint Columba, who first preached Christianity in Scotland. It is asserted that, when erecting a building on Iona in about the year 565, he offered up one of his companions named Oran as a foundation-sacrifice. But the story current in recent years about the death of Oran in the Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland is entirely different. It was to the effect that a controversy arose between Columba and his friend Oran on a point of theology. As Oran obstinately held to his opinion, despite the threat of being buried alive if he did not recant, a pit was dug as deep as Oran was tall and in it he was buried up to his neck. Three days later Columba paid him a visit and asked if he would now recant. His

\* *The Legend of Perseus*, by E. S. Hartland (David Nutt, 1896), Vol. III, p. 78.

answer was, "Heaven is different from what you think and so is hell. Nor are the good eternally happy, nor the bad eternally unhappy." The saint was so shocked by this impiety that he instantly ordered the burial to be completed, saying, "Earth ! earth ! on the mouth of Oran, lest scandal should be given to the faith, lest offence should be given to the brethren." This saying passed into a proverb, and is said to be in use in the Highlands at the present day.\*

Carmichael says that he heard this story of the burial of Oran in several different localities. This being so, and also the fact of the saint's order about burying Oran having survived as a proverb, there seems no room for doubt that the story is substantially true. Yet it has been asserted that the story is a much disguised account of a foundation-sacrifice. No reason has hitherto been given why a foundation-sacrifice story should be thus altered. Nor can any sensible reason be given why such an alteration is likely to have happened, or any reason for thinking that it did happen. But history consists of the facts of the case as seen by the historian. A reason can be given why the story of a cruel murder committed by this saint should be toned down into a foundation-sacrifice—namely, a desire to preserve his character. It may be added that the successors of Columba have never shown any particular interest in foundation-sacrifices ; on the other hand, they assiduously followed and bettered the saint's example in the treatment of heretics. They continued to do so until they were prevented by the growth of humane feelings.

Doubt might be entertained as to the correctness of this interpretation if it could be shown that Columba was of a peaceful disposition. The contrary was the case. His coming to Scotland as a missionary was probably due to

\* *Carmina Gadelica*, by A. Carmichael (Oliver & Boyd, 1928), Vol. II, p. 339, and an article by G. L. Gomme in *The Antiquary*, Vol. III, January, 1881, p. 8.

the fact of his having been excommunicated for having taken part in a battle at Culdrenna in Sligo. This battle was an outcome of a quarrel due to Columba having surreptitiously made a copy of a manuscript belonging to Finnen, Abbot of Moville.\* After having founded his monastery in Iona, Columba frequently revisited Ireland and took part in its wars.†

\* *A History of Ireland*, by E. Curtis (Methuen & Co., 1936), p. 13.

† *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. XXI, pp. 9 and 343.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RITES OF DIONYSUS

IN an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on the religion of the ancient Greeks, certain rites attending the worship of Dionysus are referred to and dismissed as "abominations." If these rites were nothing more than instances of unrestrained and perverted cruelty there could be no object in any further notice of them in an article written for educated readers. But, as we shall see, these rites were the result of a remarkable form of mania of great psychological interest. To describe these rites without producing a feeling of nausea and disgust is not easy. Sir J. G. Frazer has done so with a degree of success that it would be difficult to emulate. It will be advisable to follow in his footsteps.

He prefaces his description \* of the sacrifices that used to be offered to the Greek god variously known as Dionysus or Bacchus by an account of certain cannibals of British Columbia who are liable to attacks of mad frenzy in which they tear to pieces with their teeth the human corpses they are about to eat. In these paroxysms they may also bite pieces from the arms of living people. The customs vary slightly from tribe to tribe. One tribe has a sect whose members take dogs as their victims in place of human beings. In Morocco are certain fanatics who are liable to attacks of frenzy, during which they tear goats to pieces and eat them. Occasionally dogs are also their victims, a noteworthy fact as the dog is an unclean animal in the religion of Mahomed. In some

\* *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, pp. 18-26.



instances a similar frenzy used to be regarded as part of a sacrificial ceremony. Examples of this have been recorded in the Grecian Archipelago and also from India in which either a man or a girl was a victim and was torn limb from limb. In these latter cases the frenzy was retained but the cannibalism was omitted. Frazer goes on to mention instances in which such sacrifices were justified by legendary explanations. The victim was supposed to represent a god who, during his earthly life, had been torn in pieces. Dionysus was a god, probably of Thracian origin, who had undergone this fate. The priests justified certain sacrifices in which men were torn in pieces by worshippers in a state of frenzy as being a representation of the death of Dionysus. He was often identified with a bull or a goat and, for this reason, in some localities sacrifices in his honour were carried out in which one or other of these animals would be torn in pieces. Next we meet with instances in which a connection has been asserted to exist between such sacrifices and the fertility of the soil. In this class of sacrifice frenzied tearing with the teeth appears to have played little or no part. The body of the victim would be cut up and a piece of flesh would be buried in every field, or in some analogous way the fertilizing effect of the sacrifice on the soil would be ensured. Such progress as is implied in this change led to further progress. As crops are annual, the ceremony had also to be annual. Hence, in some places, the necessity was realized of the sacrificed god coming to life again in readiness for his death in the following year. The sacrifice could be carried out, but not the resurrection. This difficulty may have been surmounted by replacing the real sacrifice by a pretended one, and, if so, this naturally would be accompanied by a pretended resurrection. In certain villages in Thrace an annual festival is still enacted which includes a drama, certain details of which, in the opinion

of Sir J. G. Frazer, indicate that it is a relic of the worship of Dionysus. For example, the chief performers are dressed in goatskins, reminding us of the identification of Dionysus with a goat. There is a simulated killing and flaying of the victim and then the resurrection of the goatskin-clad actor, which may be compared with the traditional slaughter and resurrection of the god himself. It is noteworthy that various versions exist of the resurrection of Dionysus, but these are not so widespread as the tradition of his death, thus suggesting that the return to life was a later accretion.

In Greece there is reason for suspecting that, within historical times, acts of cannibal frenzy were restricted to the priests, for the three daughters of King Minyas appear to have been punished for succumbing to the temptation to follow the custom. They cast lots among themselves as to which should yield her child to be the victim. The lot fell on Leucippe, whose child Hippasus was thereupon torn limb from limb and eaten.\*

The available evidence points to the following conclusions:—

1. That cannibal frenzy, similar to that observed among Red Indian tribes in British Columbia, once existed in Greece and Thrace, and also in some islands off the west coast of Asia Minor. There is a possibility that in the distant past it had a still wider distribution.

2. That the outbreaks recurred periodically. In British Columbia they happened after the salmon-fishing season. The association of the rites of Dionysus with a harvest festival seems to indicate that in Greece also they were an annual occurrence.† One may therefore guess that the outbreaks represented a release of energy that

\* *The Dying God*, by Sir J. G. Frazer, p. 164.

† For further details of the cannibal frenzy among Red Indians of British Columbia see *The Natural History of Man*, by J. C. Pritchard, 1845.

beforehand had been employed either in catching salmon or in harvesting the crops.

3. That no valid grounds exist for suspecting that religion was the source of this mental aberration. It seems more probable that the frenzy came first and that its association with religious beliefs in Greece was a later development.

It is highly probable that cannibal frenzy came to be regarded as a social evil in those localities in which it has died out.

Such scraps of evidence as are available indicate that checking the outbreaks of cannibal frenzy was no simple task. In Greece, two kings are said to have been torn in pieces owing to their having tried to interfere with the rites of Dionysus.\* The Egyptian god Osiris is said to have been torn in pieces. He is supposed to have been a king who weaned his subjects from the practice of cannibalism.

Perhaps more subtle methods than direct interference were needed for dealing with cannibal frenzy. Let us consider certain superstitious practices that may have had this function.

Human nature is such that in any community individuals are met with who are inclined to conduct that is not in the general interest. In civilized communities conduct of this kind is regarded as a sin. The temptation to sin is countered by threats of punishment. In less civilized or uncivilized communities, as Frazer has pointed out,† temptations are often countered in a different way. The sinner is confronted, not by any prescribed punishment, but by the necessity of conforming to various taboos or customs of a more or less unpleasant or inconvenient nature. Certain customs connected with cannibal frenzy seem to be of this description.

\* *Spirits of the Corn and Wild*, Vol. I, p. 24.

† *The Devil's Advocate, a Plea for Superstition* (Macmillan, 1927).

Among the tribes of British Columbia who suffer from cannibal frenzy, various customs exist that seem likely to discourage its indulgence. Those who succumbed to the temptation became subject to a number of highly inconvenient taboos and restrictions. In the case of a novice, for a year afterwards he was not allowed to live with his wife. For sixteen days after an outburst of their frenzy the cannibals were not allowed to eat hot food; if the food was hot they were not allowed to blow on it to cool it; and so on.\* With some tribes the cannibals had to pay compensation to those they had bitten and for the corpses of slaves that they had eaten.

With one tribe—the Haeltzuk of Nootka Sound—indulgence in the frenzy was confined to the chief. When the salmon-fishing season was over and they were settling down for the winter, he would retire to the forest, where he pretended to fast, though food was brought to him secretly by an attendant. Day after day the tribe waited for his reappearance, their anticipation of what would happen perhaps serving to some extent as a substitute for the actual indulgence. At length the chief suddenly appeared. Men, women, and children fled at his approach. But a few bolder individuals stood their ground and offered him their arms, from which he would bite one or more pieces. No further acts of cannibalism took place.† In view of the customs prevalent in neighbouring tribes, there can be little room for doubt that this restriction of the frenzy to the chief is an amelioration of an earlier condition in which the extent of the frenzy was not so limited. The custom of the Haeltzuk tribe therefore gives ground for suspecting that other instances of reservation of cannibalism to the king or priest should be regarded as a means of restricting the practice.

\* *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, p. 188.

† *The Natural History of Man*, by J. C. Pritchard (1845), p. 415.

If, as seems probable, indulgence in the frenzy in Greece was ultimately restricted to the priests, such restriction resembles an amelioration of the same nature as that observed in the Haeltzuk tribe. Some slight ground for regarding this interpretation as probable is furnished by a very curious custom described by Plutarch. He tells us that the female descendants of King Minyas were still, in his time, compelled to expiate the murder of Leucippe's child. Every year they were obliged to be present at the festival of the Agrionia. The priest of Dionysus would then chase them with a drawn sword, and if he caught one of them he was allowed to kill her. One was sacrificed in this way in his time, Plutarch relates, by a priest named Zoilus. His thus recording the name of the priest suggests that then already the custom had become so far ameliorated that the actual killing was a rare occurrence. The husbands of these women were obliged to wear clothes of sombre colour to suggest grief and mourning. The sight of these women and the knowledge of their possible fate would be likely to discourage anyone who felt a desire to indulge in cannibal frenzy.

What is the origin of cannibal frenzy? An answer to this question is suggested by a form of frenzy that occurs in the island of Celebes in connection with head-hunting. On the return of the warriors after a raid, the villagers fall into a state of frenzied excitement in which they bite pieces from the captured enemy heads. As we shall see in a later chapter, the head-hunting raids to which such frenzy is the sequel cannot be explained as due simply to the wish to get human heads as charms for raising their crops. On the contrary, such raids have features that suggest they represent an ameliorated form of an earlier combative instinct. These warriors have lost their taste for hand-to-hand combat. Their warfare is carried on by ambush, and the rage of fighting appears in a sublimated form in the biting of the heads of the slain when these

heroes have reached the security of their villages.\* It is noteworthy that, if heads are lacking, the villagers may bite the arms of the returning warriors, thereby showing that the frenzied desire to bite is, to some extent, dissociated from the conception of fighting. Similarly with the cannibal frenzy of the Bella Coolas tribe of British Columbia, the novice, when in a paroxysm, if he failed to catch anyone to bite, would bite his own arm.

With cannibal frenzy we may suppose that the dissociation has gone further, in that, as a rule, there is no thought of enemies. But with the Kwakiutl tribe, if a cannibal bites a man whom he regards as an enemy, he will afterwards drink hot water in the hope that by so doing the bite will be made to get inflamed.

Just as in Celebes the frenzy is not confined to the warriors, but also affects villagers who took no part in the fighting, so with cannibal frenzy, other members of the community than the actual biters play a part in these repulsive customs. With the Kwakiutl there is a secret society, the Kuetskutsa, the members of which make it their business to excite the cannibals to paroxysms of fury.†

Just as the Celebes villagers are excited to frenzy by ideas of blood and murder—which frenzy is allayed only by drinking from an enemy skull or eating enemy brain—so with the Kwakiutl cannibals, there are various words, all referring to death, that are capable of arousing their frenzy. With one of them it may be the word “skull,” with another the words “head cut off.” If either of these words occur in a song, the paroxysm of the cannibal returns, and members of another secret society known as the Fool Dancers shut the doors, and the man then rushes about biting everyone he can catch.

\* *Psyche's Task*, by Sir J. G. Frazer (Macmillan, 2nd Ed., 1913), p. 122.

† *Totemism and Exogamy*, by Sir J. G. Frazer, Vol. III, p. 525.

Thus we see that there is a remarkable similarity between the frenzied biting in cannibal orgies of British Columbia and the frenzied biting of enemy heads by the inhabitants of Central Celebes.

It is likely that the Celebes custom is directly derived, as just explained, from a primitive mode of fighting in which early man attacked and bit his enemies when in a condition of berserker rage.

Some hesitation is advisable in drawing any such conclusion in respect of cannibal frenzy. Cannibal frenzy may owe its peculiar features to the fact that the ancestors of these cannibals used their teeth in fighting, but it does not follow that this frenzy is directly derived from such fighting. Cannibal frenzy may be due to some trivial and recent cause or stimulus that has occasioned a re-emergence of a desire to bite that had remained in a latent condition for many generations. When one examines the known facts relating to cannibal frenzy in greater detail than has been attempted in the preceding pages, one wonders whether, in the case of the British Columbia practices, a desire to be horrible and shocking may have been part at least of the stimulus that gave these customs their present form.

There are grounds for thinking that cannibal frenzy is rapidly losing its strength among the tribes of British Columbia. If such amelioration is going on, and if, as appears probable, it is spontaneous and not due to outside influence, such changes do not seem to harmonize well with the idea that the frenzy is a custom of any very great antiquity. The facts are as follows. John Dunn, who made his observations in 1833, describes the hideous festering wounds with marks of teeth that were made by the frenzied cannibals of the Kwakiutl, which wounds, he says, were often fatal owing to their septic nature. Franz Boas, observing in the years 1888 to 1890, says that the frenzy was so far mitigated that,

when biting, the cannibal only pinched up the flesh and sucked as much blood from it as he could, and then with a sharp knife cut off a small piece. This he returned to the owner, after the paroxysm was over, in order to satisfy him that it would not be used to do him harm by witchcraft.\*

With another of these tribes, the Bella Coolas, according to Boas, the novice has to undergo a period of seclusion, during which, in old times, he used to feed on human flesh. A slave used to be killed, and half of the body was given to the novice for this purpose. Apparently this custom is no longer followed. Boas also relates that in old times, with the Kwakiutl when in a state of ecstasy, slaves also used to be killed for cannibals. Apparently, when he visited the tribe this custom was no longer followed, and the cannibals had to be content with corpses of persons who had died a natural death.

With some members of the Bella Coola tribe the amelioration of their cannibal custom had gone further. They abstained from eating human flesh when in their frenzy, and contented themselves with tearing a dog to pieces and eating it. Others satisfied their frenzy by eating raw salmon.

These changes of custom are curious examples of the dislike of cannibalism that, in recent years, has been spreading throughout the world, and for which no satisfactory explanation seems as yet to be available.

Now let us consider what light is thrown on the nature of cannibal frenzy by the facts we have considered.

Any idea that it is due to a hope of advantage seems to be disposed of by the case of individuals of the Bella Coola tribe who satisfied their frenzy by eating raw salmon. If cannibal frenzy had been designed by a medicine-man for any purpose whatever, it seems fairly certain that he never contemplated the human flesh being

\* *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III, p. 523.



replaced by fish. Anybody who hoped to get health or strength or courage by eating human flesh could scarcely expect to get it by biting a dead salmon. Such variations in the form of the custom suggest that we are dealing with a mad desire for frenzied biting and nothing else.

The idea of advantage to be got from the custom seems also incompatible with another mitigation that has arisen in recent years, in which a small piece of flesh is snipped off during the paroxysm and afterwards returned to its owner.

Both these changes in the form of the custom suggest that we are dealing with a desire that is gradually losing its strength.

It is important to realize that the desire is not confined to the few individuals who indulge in frenzied biting. Some had no desire to bite, but desired to be bitten. Others, such as members of the Kuetskutsa society, merely desired that biting should take place, and got pleasure by stimulating the frenzy of others.

Cannibal frenzy cannot be explained by the supposition that it is due to suggestion. The suggestion of seeing a man offer his arm to be bitten, or the suggestion involved in hearing certain words that start paroxysms of the frenzy, can scarcely be regarded as the origin of this mental disorder. Such suggestions are merely triggers or keys that open the door for a pent-up emotion. Neither can cannibal frenzy be easily stopped by suggestion. The various unpleasant taboos to which anyone who indulges in it will be subject form a strong suggestion to him to avoid the temptation. The strength of the desire involved is indicated by the fact that such suggestions may fail in their apparent object of checking this mental disorder. That in Greece the desire used to have overmastering strength is suggested by the story already told of mothers casting lots as to which of their children should be taken as victim for a cannibal feast.

The sequence we have considered begins with a supposed mode of fighting in which there was a frenzied desire to tear the flesh of enemies with the teeth, to eat it, and to drink their blood. A survival, or perhaps more probably a reappearance, of this mode of fighting exists with the Seri Indians of the Gulf of California, whose teeth and nails are said to be more feared by their neighbours than are their artificial weapons.

The next stage in the sequence is met with among certain of the tribes of Central Celebes, who indulge in frenzied biting of the heads of their slain enemies in the security of their villages on their return from a head-hunting raid. At this stage the desire affects the whole population.

A further degradation of the desire is met with in the cannibal frenzy of British Columbia and in the past also in Greece, where the desire for frenzied biting is dissociated from the idea of biting enemies. An apparent beginning of this dissociation is met with in Celebes, where the women bite the arms of their returning warriors if they come back empty-handed from their raids.

A further degradation of the desire is shown by instances in which only a few individuals are seized with the desire to bite.

A last amelioration of the desire, and one that appears to have developed only in recent years, is that in which the frenzied individuals satisfy their rage by tearing to pieces a dead salmon. When we come to ameliorations of other persistent customs, we shall also meet with replacements of an equally foolish nature. In every case the fading desire needs to be satisfied by some action that is only a shadow of the original and grim reality.

The madness of cannibal frenzy seems to be something more than can be produced by suggestion. It is something

that if latent can be liberated by suggestion. But something more than suggestion seems needed to explain its origin, its gradual modification with the passage of time, and its transmission from one generation to the next.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE KING-KILLING CUSTOM

WE have now to consider a strange and paradoxical custom that exists, or has existed recently, in several countries—the custom of putting the king to death either after a fixed term of years or whenever his subjects feel the need of a change of rulers.

A circumstance that makes the custom still more astonishing is the fact that sometimes the killing of the king is, or has been, carried out with great brutality, as though a sudden paroxysm of hatred had replaced the respect that is normally accorded to him by his subjects.

As regards the origin of this strange custom, we have to consider the possibility that it was due to some theological reason. Though a reason of this kind may be given as an explanation of the custom, it is very difficult to believe that it arose owing to such reason having been put forward by a priest at a time when the idea of killing the king had never been heard of. Hence we must admit that no satisfactory explanation of the origin of the custom is available and, so far as we can see, there is little room for hope of any advance in knowledge that could dispel this ignorance. It seems as though the ancestors or some of the ancestors of the races that have held to this custom once acquired a desire to have a ruler of their own choice, and also that they acquired a wish to indulge this choice at intervals of a few years.

On the other hand, there is room for discussion as to the means by which the custom is maintained. Human sacrifice, as we have seen, is maintained not for any

theological reasons, but owing to the transmission of a desire which, in the course of time, is satisfied by some parody of its original aim. We have to consider whether the king-killing custom is similarly maintained owing to transmission of a desire, or whether its continuation is due to any superstitious or theological belief. A means of distinguishing between these two possibilities is afforded by substitute customs by which, in the course of ages, the king-killing custom has, in many places, been ameliorated. If the maintenance of the custom is due to the transmission of a desire, then we may expect the substitute customs to be of a trivial and ridiculous nature. If the maintenance of the custom is due to any theological belief, then we may anticipate that any substitute custom will have a theological flavour. If maintenance of the custom is due to transmission of a desire of the same nature as that concerned in the persistent customs already discussed, then we may expect that this desire would wane with time and that, as a prelude to the disappearance of the custom, some observance would be accepted that more or less clearly recalled or represented the attack on the king's life. The facts of the case agree to a striking degree with this anticipation.

For instance, in ancient Babylon an annual festival was celebrated in which a condemned criminal took the place of the king and, after a reign of five days, was put to death.\*

More striking evidence to the same effect is offered by certain ceremonies connected with the king-killing custom that once existed in Southern India. There, in the kingdom of Calicut, the reign of the king was strictly limited to a term of twelve years. At the end of that period he had to cut his throat in public. A scaffold was erected for the purpose. His suicide took place after he had

\* *The Golden Bough. Part III. The Dying God*, by Sir J. G. Frazer (Macmillan & Co., 1923), p. 113.

given a feast to his nobility and gentry. At some undetermined date this custom was replaced by another in which the part that was unpleasant for the king was omitted. Now, the analogy of other replacements of inhuman customs would lead one to anticipate that the new procedure would consist of the king cutting the throat of someone who could be easily spared, perhaps that of a criminal or even of a dog, or alternatively cutting of the king's throat might be replaced by a pretence of so doing. The new custom was, however, of quite another kind, and is of remarkable interest.

A great feast was held that lasted for ten or twelve days. On the last day, the king took up his position in a tent pitched for him on a large plain half a mile distant from a temple. He was surrounded by his guards, some thirty or forty thousand in number. A road was kept clear from the temple to the king's tent. It was lined on either side by soldiers armed with spears. On a given signal a group of men, decked with flowers and smeared with ashes, came out from the temple and attempted to reach the tent where the king awaited them. They carried swords, and it was understood that, if any one of them reached the tent and slew the king, he would succeed to the throne. Success, however, was impossible. The swordsmen were allowed to attack in groups of four. One group after another started from the temple to meet their inevitable fate. In the year 1683 no less than fifty-five men perished in these attacks. Frazer refers to this "magnificent display of gallantry" as a useless sacrifice of life, but adds: "Yet perhaps no sacrifice is wholly useless which proves that there are men who prefer honour to life." \* That any such sentimental reason inspired the ceremony is a pure supposition. Let us look for another and more prosaic explanation.

\* *The Dying God*, p. 50.

This singular custom has the appearance of having been designed to satisfy public opinion. It might be suggested that the public, having been accustomed to the exciting spectacle of the king cutting his own throat, objected to being cheated of their fun, and had to be pacified by the equally exciting spectacle of the swordsmen being killed by the guards. But such an explanation is insufficient. It fails to explain the frenzied excitement that led the swordsmen to their certain death.

That success in the attack on the king was not expected or even hoped for is indicated by the name of the ceremony—"Maha Makham" or Great Sacrifice. This idea of sacrifice was further expressed by the opponents being smeared with ashes, an adornment otherwise used only by fakirs who have renounced worldly desires. A certain religious sanction was given to the proceedings by the arrangement that the opponents of the king should start from a temple. On the occasion of the ceremony held in 1695, a nephew of one of the desperadoes, a boy of fifteen or sixteen years, when he saw his uncle fall, managed to get through the guards into the tent and "made a stroke at his Majesty's head, which failed owing to a brass lamp being in the way." Before he could strike again he was cut down by the guards. This incident suggests that the paroxysm of hatred of the king was not confined to the swordsmen who laid down their lives.

Before making a suggestion as to the meaning of this replacement ceremony, let us consider the form once taken by the king-killing custom in the neighbouring state of Quilicare. There, on the completion of the twelfth year of his reign, the king had to take up his position on a scaffold and, before a large crowd of people, had to commit suicide in a most unpleasant way. Sharp knives were provided with which he was obliged to cut off his nose and other portions of his body, and lastly,

when he began to faint, he had to cut his throat. The cruelty of the proceedings arouses the suspicion that, underlying the wish to replace the king, there was a paroxysm of hatred that had replaced the respect normally felt by his subjects. Analogy therefore suggests that a similar hatred of the king accompanied the original custom of king-killing in Calicut. This hatred was of a kind that could be satisfied only by a serious attack on his life. In a few individuals this desire produced an insane frenzy that led them to devote their lives to the attack on the king. With the majority of the population either the desire was not felt at all, or it was of such a nature that it was satisfied by seeing the attack on the king made by others.

The idea of a periodically recurring paroxysm of hatred of the king is, to some extent, supported by a practice that used to exist in the neighbouring state of Malabar. There it used to be customary for the king to appoint a substitute and to invest him with all regal powers both executive and judicial. After having held the post for five years, this substitute was decapitated. His head was thrown up into the air and scrambled for. Whoever caught it became his successor.\* A reason for regarding this custom as a modified form of the king-killing ceremony is to be found in the fact that Malabar adjoined Calicut and Quilacare, and that no other instances of the king-killing custom have been recorded anywhere else in India.

These remarkable customs have every appearance of having been designed to satisfy a desire for an attack on the life of the ruler. Whoever designed them must have

\* No hesitation need be felt in accepting this story on the ground that candidates would appear likely to be lacking for a post of such limited tenure, for, as regards this point, several instances are quoted by Frazer of complete lack of fear of death, and even of willingness to die in order to gain some immediate advantage (*The Dying God*, p. 136).



been aware that the desire existed and also that it was of an entirely irrational nature, and therefore could be satisfied by an attack carried out in circumstances that precluded any chance of success. Alternatively it was recognized that the desire could be satisfied by killing the minister who was acting as substitute for the king.

There are just the same difficulties in understanding how such desires were transmitted as there are with the transmission of the desires concerned in other persistent customs.

It is difficult to regard such desires as resulting from respect for tradition owing to the intensity of the effect. How, it may be asked, can respect for tradition of something that happened twelve years previously suddenly induce a number of men to face certain death in attacking the king when surrounded by thousands of his guards? It is difficult to explain such desires as due to a wish to conform to custom, for these substitute ceremonies, when first introduced, involved a disregard of custom. It is difficult to explain these desires as due to suggestion acting on each individual, for the frenzy of the swordsmen of Calicut was not infectious; it did not spread from one man to his neighbour, as does the frenzy or panic of an excited mob. Yet it is probable that each substitute custom did arise owing to suggestion made by the king or his ministers. Such suggestion did not originate the impulse; it merely deflected it into a comparatively harmless channel. As the events proved, the desire was waning, and, as with the desires underlying other persistent customs when losing their hold, it was satisfied by an action that was a parody of its former aim.

Like the desires concerned in other persistent customs, the desire for the killing of the king, as it lost its hold, affected only a small part of the population. Such

limited incidence of an influence coming from the past, otherwise than by tradition or suggestion, is a phenomenon quite inexplicable in the light of accepted views on the nature of inheritance. A suggestion as to its mode of transmission will be put forward in the last two chapters of this book.

Another point of interest about the king-killing custom is the extent to which it has been losing its hold in several countries in recent years. The wide distribution of the custom, the many forms it takes, and the numerous substitute replacements of it, all agree in indicating that it is one of immense antiquity. Why, then, is it that, having lasted so long, it has died out in so many places and over so wide an area, if not simultaneously, at least within the last few centuries? For instance, the killing of the king in Calicut was put an end to sometime in the seventeenth century. Its replacement ceremony was enacted for the last time in the year 1743. In Eyeo in West Africa, the king put a stop to the custom in 1774, fighting his ministers for the purpose. The custom was, however, revived and lasted till late in the nineteenth century. At Fazoql on the Blue Nile the hanging of the king who had lost the love of his subjects came to an end some time after the middle of the nineteenth century. In another tribe in this district the last killing of the king took place in the year 1837 or 1838. The king-killing custom was put an end to by the reigning monarch of Meroe in Ethiopia in the time of Ptolemy II, King of Egypt (309-247 B.C.). Many other instances of the king-killing custom have been met with by travellers in places where it is now no longer known. It existed on the north coast of Sumatra in 1777. Ibn Batuta, in the first half of the fourteenth century, saw, in Java, a ceremony which is regarded by Sir J. G. Frazer as a substitute for the killing of the king. In the Shilluk tribe of the White Nile it is doubtful whether or not the custom is now

extinct. In Unyoro down to recent years the king had to commit suicide if attacked by disease.\*

The dying out of so ancient a custom over so wide an area in so comparatively short a time is a remarkable phenomenon for which no satisfactory explanation seems as yet available. Such change for the better has happened during the last few centuries with several other brutal customs. Among these we may mention cannibalism, the mounting of heads of criminals or enemies on stakes, etc.

In many places where the killing of the king has been replaced by a substitute observance, part of the proceeding is a period of disorder. This fact indicates that the original desire to kill the king included a desire to be free of the trammels of his government and that this latter desire was the more lasting of the two. In ancient Babylon the disorder lasted for five days, during which time a criminal sat on the throne and masters and servants changed places. In Hawaii the period is, or was, a month. It included a pretence of an attack on the king, a sham fight, and a general remission of punishments. In Fazolglou in Africa after the killing of the king had been abolished it was commemorated in an annual festival of the nature of a saturnalia. In Calicut, as stated above, the king-killing custom and also its substitute ceremony were accompanied by a festival that lasted for ten or twelve days. In the Indian native state of Gwalior, a part of the ceremony of installation of a rajah is the looting of certain shops in the bazaar that have been specially stocked by the authorities for this purpose. There is no tradition or legend of the king-killing custom ever having existed in Gwalior. It is merely a possibility that the looting of the bazaar is a relic of such a custom.

\* These data are taken from *The Dying God*, by Sir J. G. Frazer (Macmillan, 1923), pp. 14-58.

Frazer has pointed out the possibility that the king-killing custom once existed in Europe. This idea appears to derive some support from the fact that in European countries a wish for a change of government is apt to appear every few years. Whether or not this wish is a relic of the king-killing custom, or whether it is a relic of the frame of mind that has elsewhere given rise to this custom, or whether it has no connection with any such custom, the fact must be recognized that such a desire does appear at intervals. In democratic communities it is satisfied by means of periodical parliamentary elections. In countries where this is not done, the rulers often find severe repression to be needed to ensure the stability of their governments. If the desire for a change of government has any connection, whether direct or indirect, with the king-killing custom, then it is possible that an important part of an election is the feeling of release from government control till the new government is formed. If so, the fact that an election needs a period of a week or more for its completion may be an advantage. The same may be said of the rowdy conduct that often occurs during this period.

## CHAPTER X

### PERSISTENT MODES OF THOUGHT AND NATIONAL SELF-RESPECT

OUR conduct is liable to be influenced by certain persistent modes of thought that so closely resemble persistent customs as to furnish further arguments in favour of the conclusions to which we have arrived as to the nature and source of these attributes of the mind.

The only persistent mode of thought to which reference has been made hitherto is incest abhorrence. It resembles a persistent custom in the following respects :

1. It has developed within the human period, or at least within a recent period of our ancestry.

2. It has no survival value. A lack of inclination would guard sufficiently against any possible ill-effect of interbreeding.

3. Neither education nor suggestion can account for the horror and disgust produced in some races by the marriage of cousins. The frenzied rage caused by such a marriage may be far stronger than is ordinarily produced by any recognized instinct.

4. The abhorrence is less to-day than it has been in the past.

5. It varies in its intensity. Of two neighbouring tribes belonging to the same race and living under apparently similar conditions, one tribe may have it strongly developed, while in the other only a mild disapproval of it is apparent. In one or two instances in the Solomon Islands, father-daughter marriages are allowed, though marriage of cousins is forbidden.\*

\* *History of Human Marriage*, by E. Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 84.

A persistent mode of thought of greater importance is that connected with the desire for religious belief and observance. This desire resembles those concerned in maintaining persistent customs in the following respects :

1. It is a motive for conduct that has developed within the human period of our ancestry. It has acted far more powerfully in the past than it does to-day, at least among the more progressive races.

2. Its compelling force—as shown, for example, in the fortitude of martyrs—has often been greater than that of any instinct.

3. The tendency to be religious is irregular in its distribution. In one and the same community some individuals may be indifferent to it while others are deeply affected.

4. It may be the source of occasional outbreaks of frenzied conduct. This is shown both in scenes of excitement in revivalist meetings and also in holy wars and crusades. The part played by suggestion on such occasions is to liberate a latent tendency.

5. There has been an amelioration in the forms of religious belief throughout the ages. The cannibal god who thirsted for human blood is now a thing of the past so far as the more advanced races are concerned. The god who was feared has been replaced by the god who is loved.

6. The impulse to be religious is due to a desire that comes to us from the past. It is a desire that resembles an instinct and differs from an instinct in the same way as do the desires concerned in the maintenance of persistent customs. That the desire consists in a wish for religious observance rather than a wish to adhere to any particular creed is proved by occasional results of cessation of religious belief. In Russia, for instance, the anti-religious propaganda of the Bolshevik Government has

in several instances had the extraordinary result of leading ignorant peasants to give up Christianity and to indulge in pagan ceremonies in its place.\*

In civilized societies the waning of religious belief appears to dispose some individuals to belief in spiritualism or astrology, or to cling to various superstitious beliefs and observances. In so doing they often show a lack of critical faculty that would be surprising in the lowest savages. For example, the late Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the well-known Socialist writer, had "a quaint store of primitive beliefs. . . . He was glad to see the new moon, if not through glass, a crescent feather of light; he was quite seriously distressed when he thought I had broken a mirror, glad if a rook flew across his path, and a little troubled if he dreamt of cloudy water or of blood. Who," says his biographer, "will account for the presence of such things in so well-ordered a mind?" † Perhaps, it may be suggested, they were the result of that desire for mysterious belief and observances that in the majority of the population results in adherence to a religious creed.

According to Jung, the desire for "a religious outlook on life" is so deeply implanted in the European mind that in some individuals its absence results in a neurosis. ‡ The evidence he brings forward in support of this conclusion is in no way impugned by, and also in no way impugns, any suggestion that may be made as to a humble or trivial source of religious belief.

Now let us go on to mention race prejudice, a persistent mode of thought that also resembles a persistent custom. This feeling differs from an instinct in that it is by no

\* *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, by René Fülöp-Miller (Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. 218.

† *The Last Years of H. M. Hyndman*, by R. T. Hyndman (Grant Richards, 1923), p. 136.

‡ *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, by C. G. Jung (Kegan Paul, 1934), pp. 264 and 266.

means uniformly spread throughout a civilized community. Unlike the instinctive dislike of strangers of the same species frequently observed among the higher animals, race prejudice may be completely latent. In such a case it may be aroused as a result of living in a community in which dislike of some particular foreign race is traditional, or it may suddenly appear owing to an experience of conduct by a member of another race that is disliked. However trivial such conduct may be, and however unlikely it may be that his compatriots will behave similarly, his action serves as an excuse for dislike of the whole of his race.\* Because race prejudice is apt to be stronger or more readily shown by uneducated than by educated persons, it is often supposed to be a result of ignorance. But many facts, especially experience gained during the Great War, give ample reason for asserting that with ordinary people, a limited amount of intercourse and acquaintance between individuals of different white races, when hospitality is not involved, is apt to arouse and stimulate, rather than to assuage, race prejudice. Since writing this sentence an identical opinion expressed by the late Lord Cromer has become known to me. He asserted that "the fundamental consideration in diplomacy is that all nations cordially dislike one another, and the more closely their populations come into touch, the more they tend to dislike one another." †

It has been suggested in Chapter II that the desire for property in man is something more than an instinct inherited from animal ancestors. His desire for property

\* For example, a Chinese student relates in his autobiography how he heard a story of a Chinaman being cheated by a missionary. "With this," he says, "began my hatred of all foreigners in China." This story about the missionary was disbelieved by a Chinese magistrate who investigated the affair. [*Chinese Testament*, by S. Tretiakov (Gollancz, 1934, p. 74).]

† *The Anvil of War: Letters between F. S. Oliver and his brother* (Macmillan, 1936), p. 209.



because it is property has the features of a persistent mode of thought. There is no reason for thinking that the death penalty for theft and the death penalty for incest were products of a moral code. In each case these penalties may properly be regarded as relics of a period of conflict consequent on the need for thrashing out conventions as to ownership. Like other persistent modes of thought, the desire for property exhibits irregularity in its incidence. As shown in the map (Fig. 5), of two neighbouring communities, one may have it strongly developed so that it uses the death penalty for theft, while in the other theft is unknown or punishments for theft are of a lenient and trivial nature.

Our political feelings resemble, in many respects, the desires concerned in the maintenance of persistent customs. They differ from instincts in that they may affect only a small proportion of the members of a community. Though not instinctive, they may have a more compelling influence on conduct than any recognized instinct. They may be valueless or harmful to the individual and also of very problematical use to his community. With the exception of a part of our patriotic feelings, they have originated within the human period of our ancestry. They may remain in abeyance for centuries and then reappear at full strength. They are liable to be replaced by counterparts, as happens with persistent customs. For instance, Herbert Spencer has pointed out that what he calls the bias of patriotism may be replaced by the bias of anti-patriotism. Similarly the feeling of imperialism is, in England at the present day, frequently replaced by the bias of anti-imperialism.

Our political feelings have yet another resemblance to the desires that maintain persistent customs, in that they may be satisfied by substitutes just as the desire for human sacrifice may be satisfied by a mock human sacrifice. For example, the desire for a king who rules

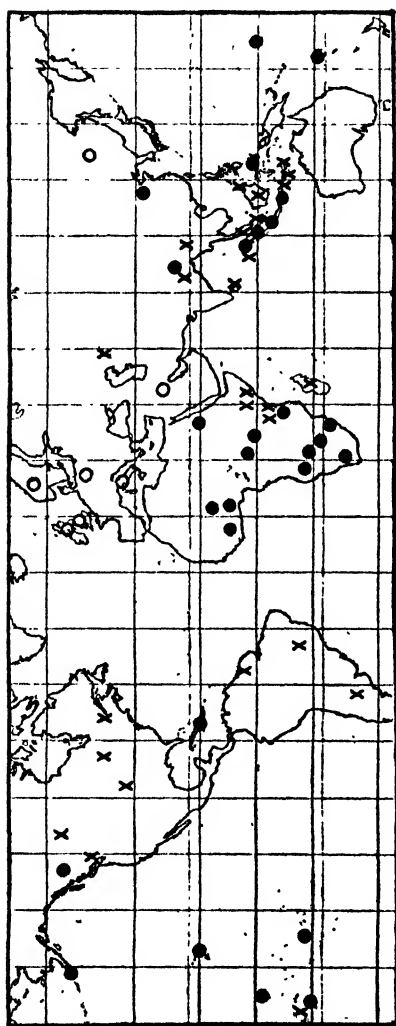


FIG. 5.—VARIATIONS IN PUNISHMENT FOR THEFT.

- Death penalty for theft.
- Ditto formerly.
- X Lenient punishment for theft or theft unknown or rare.

may be satisfied by a king whose power of ruling is strictly limited by a constitution.

Of our various political feelings, patriotism is the first one to claim our attention.

We may admit, as has been asserted by Mr. H. G. Wells, that if a newly-born Italian baby were to change places with a newly-born English baby, each of them would develop the patriotic feelings of the country in which he grew up. But the fact, as it appears to be, that a baby is not born with a tendency to be loyal to a particular country fails to exclude the possibility that he has a tendency that comes to him from the past to be loyal to the community, whichever it is, in which he may happen to be brought up. Naturalists tell us that territorial rights are widely recognized among the higher animals. There is nothing improbable in the idea that such recognition, inherited by us from our animal ancestors, is one factor in the love of one's country that seems to be found everywhere throughout the human race except when apparently and temporarily driven off the stage by political disturbances, as happened in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Various factors combine to produce the mental disposition to which the term patriotism is properly applied.

In the first place, patriotism includes a sentimental love of one's country. It is widespread and perhaps universal even among the lowest savages.\* Tribes of nomadic habits may even show attachment to some particular valley that they regard as specially associated with their life. Such facts indicate that love of one's country is not something learnt from schoolmasters or due to a desire to conform to custom: it has the appearance of being an innate quality of the mind.

Secondly, patriotism includes a feeling of loyalty to

\* *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, by E. Westermarck (Macmillan, 2nd Ed., 1926), Vol. II, p. 168.

one's government and to one's fellow-countrymen. This feeling is of the same nature as loyalty to one's family or to one's associates in any business or enterprise. It is part of, or connected with, the so-called gregarious instincts and the instinct of self-preservation. This part of patriotism appears to be an indispensable part of our attitude on political and public affairs. There is nothing necessarily aggressive about it. Indeed, it often exists in an exaggerated degree in the most peace-loving individuals.

Closely and perhaps inevitably associated with patriotism is a feeling that we may describe as national self-respect. Consider a possible occurrence. A population is living contentedly under alien rule until a political agitator arrives. As a result of his suggestion the foreign rule comes to be regarded as an intolerable grievance. No great degree of eloquence or powers of persuasion are needed to produce this result. The political agitator merely pulls the trigger and releases a hidden store of national feeling. It is a feeling that does not appear to have been inherited from our animal ancestors. It seems to have developed during the human period. It may remain latent for centuries and then suddenly spring into full activity on an appropriate stimulus. Its manifestation may be restricted to a small proportion of the members of the community. In all these respects national self-respect resembles the persistent customs that we have discussed in earlier chapters.

Thus there is no reason for regarding as a new creation the ebullition of national feeling that we have witnessed both in Europe and in Asia in recent years. Evidence is available that it existed in Europe in the distant past. For instance, it is said that in Gaul before its invasion by Cæsar there were a number of independent states among whom national feeling was exceptionally strong.\* In the

\* *The Life of Cæsar*, by Guglielmo Ferrero (G. Allen & Unwin, 1933), p. 271.

Dark Ages that followed the fall of the Roman Empire, the ensuing conditions of social disorder and political instability gave no room for the appearance of national feeling.

National feeling may exist in two forms—namely, national self-respect and nationalism. In the remaining part of this chapter we will consider national self-respect. The nature of nationalism will be dealt with in the sequel.

There is nothing of an aggressive nature about national self-respect. Politicians of all parties recognize this fact. They also recognize the fact that indulgence of national self-respect tends towards national contentment. In order to appreciate better what is understood by the term, let us consider some opinions expressed in recent years by politicians and political writers.

In his opening speech at the Assembly of the League of Nations in September, 1929, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is reported as having said that the British attitude at a conference that had recently been held at the Hague had been prompted by self-respect.

In a speech in 1930, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said that one motive of the Imperial Conference then sitting was "to satisfy the legitimate and lawful desires that each Dominion should feel the self-respect of complete self-government." He went on to say that the Indian Round Table Conference would be engaged in the task of broadening liberty so that Indians would enjoy Dominion self-government, "which is essential for national self-respect and contentment."

The *New Statesman and Nation* of July 18, 1931, in an article dealing with the German financial crisis, said: "The pride of the Germans, though it may take disagreeable forms in some cases, is fundamentally a proper national self-respect."

According to a Commission appointed by the Secretary

of State for the Dominions, it is necessary that "the spirit of independence and pride of race characteristic of the Basuto people should be preserved at all costs as the essential condition of their future progress." \*

Similar opinions were held by an English statesman more than a hundred years ago. Sir Thomas Munro, who died when Governor of Madras in 1827, in describing the effect of British rule in India expressed himself as follows :

"The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion, and to give its subjects a degree of protection which those of no Native Power enjoy. Its laws and institutions also afford them a security from domestic oppression unknown in Native States; but these advantages are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable. . . . It is from men who either hold or are eligible for public life that nations take their character; where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of the community."

Such opinions are held by the great majority of educated Indians of to-day, but it may be doubted whether the lack of home rule was, at the time he wrote, felt by any part of the Hindu population of India as inconsistent with their self-respect.

It is important to understand clearly the nature of this national self-respect, the utility of which is thus so widely recognized. Let us begin by considering what we mean by personal self-respect. The term is not quite logical, for we say that a man has self-respect, not if his own person, but if his belongings are such that he can respect them. It conduces to a man's self-respect for him to live in a house of his own rather than to be dependent for shelter on others, for his house to be of his

\* Quoted from a review in *Nature* of June 22, 1935, p. 1028.

own choice, for his clothes, his food, his occupation, and his conduct to conform to a certain standard that he has set for himself. Supposing for any cause that a man loses confidence in himself, then it may happen that his standard is no longer one set by himself, but is a standard that is set for him by other people. He is then satisfied only if his conduct and belongings reach a pitch calculated to impress others. Consequently he suffers from a sense of inferiority. If this is so pronounced as visibly to affect his judgment, we say that he has an inferiority complex. As a result of this he makes attempts to assert his importance by means that he thinks may impress others. His self-respect is changed into, or is masked by, a spirit of self-assertion.

It is probable that the feeling of snobbishness is the source of both self-respect and self-assertion. In any unsettled state of society, and more especially in a period of intense conflict through which we have found reason for suspecting our ancestors to have passed, it would increase a man's chance of survival if he developed a habit of being friendly with the more powerful members of his tribe. It would be an advantage to him if his conduct, his weapons, and his other belongings were of a kind calculated to meet their approval. At first he might take measures to this end with the conscious desire to impress his more powerful neighbours. With the passage of time the reason for doing so might gradually vanish from his consciousness, leaving him with a desire to live up to a standard of respectability that is set by himself. Such a desire is what we recognize as self-respect. Thus the evolution of self-respect appears to be analogous to the evolution of those persistent customs in which, as has been shown, the desire may persist long after the reason for the desire has been forgotten.

We have seen that a man's self-respect demands a certain standard of respectability of his belongings. We

may regard the government under which a man lives as a part of his belongings. Just as it conduces to his self-respect to live in a house of his own choice, so it conduces to what we now propose to call national self-respect for the nation's individual members to owe allegiance to, and to live under, a government of their own choice, consisting of men of their own race and speaking their own language.

It is not meant to suggest that a man has an instinctive desire to live in his own house or to wear clothes of a particular pattern. What exists in his mind as if innate is his liability to become sensitive about any conduct or possessions that seem to him not to be so respectable as those of his neighbours. By suggestion, whether made wittingly or unwittingly, a variety of things may become essential for a man's self-respect. A man may live on a desert island without feeling the need to have a house of his own. But when he lives in a community in which he sees that all his respectable neighbours do so, he at once wants to do the same.

Similarly with regard to national self-respect; a man may live happily and contentedly under a government the members of which are of a race foreign to his own, but, as soon as political agitators arrive with their suggestions, the man discovers, or may discover, that the alien government is a grievance to remedy which he becomes ready to sacrifice his money, his security, and even his life. But the parallel is not exact. Suggestion may make a man want to live in a house. More suggestion may make him want to leave his house and live in a yacht. Political agitation may make a man want home rule, but it may be doubted whether such agitation could cause him to wish to change home rule for alien rule.\*

The foregoing description of national self-respect needs

\* The case of the Rajah of Sarawak abdicating and inviting an Englishman to undertake the government of his country is a remarkable instance of freedom from the bias we are here discussing.



qualifying. Under the stimulus received from the political agitator, a man may discover that the alien government is an intolerable grievance. But he may not. The political agitator, as a rule at least, converts only a part of the population. Those converted may feel the grievance in very different degrees. Only a small fraction of them will be willing to risk their lives and fortunes in gaining home rule. Thus in national self-respect we are dealing with a motive for conduct that, in these respects, resembles those concerned in persistent customs. In this restricted incidence it differs from instincts. Like the impulse that leads to the king-killing custom, it may remain in abeyance for years and then be brought into activity in special circumstances. It resembles the desire underlying the persistent customs in being with some individuals an even more powerful motive for conduct than are the desires associated with recognized instincts.

There is nothing necessarily aggressive about personal self-respect. On the contrary, it may in certain circumstances cause a man to curb his pugnacity and to abstain from assaulting others when smarting under a grievance. Similarly there is nothing necessarily aggressive about national self-respect. It may have a pacific tendency, for it is likely that the man who is most contented with his own government and who is most convinced of its excellence is the one who is least likely to bother himself about what others say of it. It is likely that the prominent part being played by the peoples of Great Britain and America in the movement for the limitation of armaments is not unconnected with their good opinion of the greatness and security of their respective governments.

In certain circumstances, as when an agitator stimulates a subject people to rebel, national self-respect may lead to fighting. But such eventualities are not so serious or so frequently occurring as to afford any ground for trying to discourage or abolish national self-respect. Deference

to national self-respect is a factor constantly influencing the conduct of European statesmen. The Versailles Peace Conference would have had happier results if its members had considered the national self-respect of their defeated foes in addition to their own.

## CHAPTER XI

### NATIONALISM AS A PERSISTENT MODE OF THOUGHT

THE conception we have arrived at as to the nature of persistent modes of thought gives us a new weapon for investigating nationalism. We shall find that it has the characters of such a mode of thought rather than those of an instinct. Let us commence by considering some instances of sudden and intense outbreaks of this feeling.

We will begin with the American Civil War. In this war national feeling in the form of nationalism was fully aroused. It resulted in the most furious fighting and the most terrible slaughter. This fighting took place though there was no question of race hatred between the combatants; neither was this war due to jealousy or any other feeling against a foreign nation; neither was it caused by a desire for loot or the desire to defend hearths and homes against a foreign invader.

The evidence is quite clear that the war was simply due to national feeling that had been aroused by the belief that the well-being or dignity of the nation would be harmed by the secession that was desired by the southern states.

It is sometimes thought that patriotism in its objectionable form is due to the teachings of the schoolmaster or to ill-advised writings of journalists. Certainly both the schoolmaster and the journalist may teach patriotism, and this may include a readiness to fight for one's country if it is attacked. According to psychologists such a feeling is instinctive, and if this view is right it is present

independently of any acquired ideas of patriotism. But patriotism of this kind does not include nationalism. This component of the mind is apt to ask for war for reasons of a far less defensible nature. National feeling is apt to be aroused by any insult to the dignity of one's government if such insult comes from a foreigner. If we were completely rational creatures, we might desire that the foreigner who inflicted the insult should be punished, or we might regard him as a fool to be ignored. Often this does not happen, but, under the bias caused by nationalism, we—that is to say, the members of the public—desire war against the nation to which this foreigner belongs. We become obsessed with a desire for war. We have no special desire to kill the foreigner who was guilty of the insult : we desire to kill members of his race. No school-master, unless quite bereft of his senses, could teach such a doctrine. No journalist could advocate it unless he was aware that he was expressing a feeling already present in the minds of his readers.

Let us return to the case of the American Civil War. The desire of the Southern States to withdraw from the Federation of the United States of America was due chiefly to differences of opinion about the law for reclaiming fugitive slaves.

It may be asserted without fear of contradiction that, in desiring to withdraw, the Southern States had valid reasons on their side. One proof that the idea of secession was reasonable lies in the fact that for some time they hoped that the Northern States would allow them to take this step. That it would be reasonable for them to do so was shown by the many interests and needs in which their mode of life differed from that of the Northern States. Their main industry was cotton-growing, carried on with the help of slave labour. On the other hand, the Northern States were the seat of material developments of all kinds aided not by slaves but by machinery. Not only in their

whole mode of life and thought, but also in matters of climate and geographical position, the Southern States could find reasons for wishing to secede from the Union.

However, these reasons had no weight at all when opposed by national feeling. Woodrow Wilson says that the objections to secession were historical rather than legal. In other words, they were sentimental rather than rational. He adds that "it was for long found difficult to deny that a State could withdraw from the federal arrangement as she might have declined to enter it." But to this step there was a sentimental objection that was insuperable, for "the course of events had nationalized the governments once deemed confederate."

This Civil War aptly illustrates the fact that men who consider themselves rational creatures are liable to be dominated by influences of the most irrational nature. In this case a few individuals who constituted the government of the Southern States expressed their desire to secede. Individuals forming the government of the United States objected. At once there arose the idea of killing on a large scale. This was not killing of members of the opposed governments who held these different opinions. The proposed killing was to be of private individuals who previously had no idea of what possible harm could be done to them if secession took place. Under the spur of the war fever these private individuals suddenly discovered that they were champions of a sacred cause for which they fought men of the same race as themselves through a long and exhausting war. The blame for this may lie with our cave-man ancestors. It certainly does not lie with either the schoolmaster or the journalist of to-day.

An incident that happened just before the outbreak of this war is worth noticing. At the moment when tension between the Northern and the Southern States was increasing towards breaking-point, the Secretary to the Treasury at Washington, on his own initiative, telegraphed

to New Orleans : " If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot." This telegram was in conflict with the policy of the head of the United States Government, who at the time was still hoping for an amicable settlement. Nevertheless it was greeted throughout the Northern States with enthusiasm. Thus in this instance, in accordance with what seems to be the rule, the idea of killing at once came to the fore when a threat to the dignity of the government became apparent.

The secession of Ireland from Great Britain to form the Irish Free State took place without any serious civil war. It may be suggested that this result was partly at least due to the fact that circumstances were such that secession was more in accord with the national dignity of Great Britain than would have been its refusal.

Let us now go on to consider other instances of outbursts of national feeling.

Certain expressions of opinion by the Kaiser are of interest because of the ebullition of national feeling that they evoked in England. His telegram of congratulation to President Kruger on the repulse of the Jameson Raid produced such indignation in England that, according to the then German Ambassador in London, if the British Government had desired war with Germany " on any grounds whatever, public opinion would have been unanimously in its favour." A leading London newspaper said : " It is difficult to speak calmly of this telegram. The fitting retort would be the ordering of our Mediterranean Fleet to the North Sea."

The reason for the anger that had broken out in England seems to have been the fact that the Jameson Raid had put the British Government in an undignified position. The British Government and the British public were angry and indignant at the raid into Boer territory that had been carried out by Dr. Jameson with a few friends and that had very soon been brought to an end by their being captured

by the Boers. This incident had hurt British national self-respect, and the Kaiser's telegram added fuel to the flames. This happened in 1895.

Some years later, in 1908, an interview with the Kaiser was published in the *Daily Telegraph* which produced in England "a fury of the Press equal to that that had been produced by the Kruger telegram." In this interview the Kaiser had asserted that, at the height of the Boer War, he had drawn up a plan of campaign for the British army which he had sent to England and which, he hinted, had been of use to the British military authorities. Had the Kaiser sent a plan of campaign to the Boers, the anger produced in England would have had some trace of a rational basis. What had happened was that the dignity of the British nation had been hurt by the remarkable and unexpected difficulties that had been encountered in the war in question. The British public was, in consequence, sensitive on the subject, and therefore behaved as if it were suffering from an inferiority complex, and again relieved its feelings by indignation against Germany. Had the Kaiser, in the interview, merely expressed critical opinions about our cookery, or our London fogs, or anything other than our capacity to hold our own against an enemy, probably such opinions would have been received with respect or interest, or perhaps even with amusement rather than indignation. But the Kaiser's opinions implied a slight on the power of our Government, and an outburst of national feeling ensued. Let us pass on to another instance.

At a Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce held in Amsterdam in July, 1929, the Chinese delegates surprised their colleagues by their refusal to discuss practical matters relating to trade in China. They said that the only resolution that they wished to have passed was one advocating the immediate abolition of extra-territoriality in their country. *The Times* correspondent described

the Chinese delegates as suffering from an inferiority complex. Obviously their demand was prompted by national feeling. They felt it inconsistent with the dignity of their Government for foreigners living in China not to be subject to Chinese law but to be able to claim to be tried by a judge of their own race. That a foreigner living in China should be liable when he does wrong to be punished by a judge of his own race rather than by a Chinese judge is no matter of any such practical import as would be the signing of a commercial treaty. Further, there is a possibility that the abolition of extra-territoriality at the present time might have results tending to discredit Chinese justice in the eyes of foreigners, and in this way do more harm to Chinese dignity than might be removed by the suggested change of practice. Nevertheless, sentimental considerations took precedence over practical issues.

A more interesting and more important instance of national feeling being aroused happened in the year 1895 on the occasion of a difference of opinion between the American and British Governments on a question relating to the boundary between British Guiana and the 'South American State of Venezuela. President Cleveland sent a message to Congress in which he dealt with the affair, and which ended with the following peroration: "There is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows supine submission to wrong and injustice, and a consequent loss of national self-respect and honour, beneath which are shielded and defended the people's safety and greatness." These sentiments, though so clumsily expressed, aroused an enthusiasm that was widespread, but not universal. Even the leaders of the party opposed to the President rallied to his support, though previously, till hypnotized by the appeal to national honour, they had denounced everything he had done. All the Republican papers demanded an ultimatum.



That such an outburst of national feeling should occur between such definitely war-hating countries as America and Great Britain is obviously a serious matter. It is therefore worth while to consider in detail the nature of this quarrel. The information about it that is available to me comes from an American source. British Guiana, a British possession in South America, had some difficulties with the neighbouring state of Venezuela over a question of boundaries, and had appealed for help to Great Britain. Mr. Olney, the American Secretary of State, taking his stand on his interpretation of the Monroe doctrine, claimed that British Guiana should settle its difficulties without help from England. He said that it could hardly be denied that the political union of European with American states was "unnatural and inexpedient." Lord Salisbury replied to this in a despatch from which the following is an extract :—

"The necessary meaning of these words is that the unions between Great Britain and Canada ; between Great Britain and Trinidad ; between Great Britain and British Honduras or British Guiana are 'inexpedient and unnatural.' President Monroe disclaims any such inference from his doctrine ; but in this, as in other respects, Mr. Olney develops it. . . . His Majesty's Government are prepared emphatically to deny it on behalf of both the British and American peoples who are subject to her crown."

In a second despatch Lord Salisbury wrote :

"But they cannot consent to entertain claims . . . involving transfer of large numbers of British subjects, who have for many years enjoyed the settled rule of a British colony, to a nation of different race and language, whose political system is subject to frequent disturbance, and whose institutions as yet too often afford very inadequate protection to life and property."

There can be no doubt that Lord Salisbury had much the best of the argument. His reasoning was not only better—it was conspicuously better. People commonly resent conspicuously better reasoning than their own on facts with which they are already familiar. Possibly resentment of this nature underlay the President's message, and perhaps also, when referring to national self-respect and honour, he was dimly aware of and influenced by the possibility that his own self-respect and *amour propre* would be wounded if he had to admit that he was in the wrong.

At the time of the excitement caused by the President's message, a rumour spread about that the British Fleet had sailed under sealed orders. It happened at the time that Lord Dunraven, who was yacht-racing at New York, complained that excursion steamers had got in his way. Some members of the London Stock Exchange accordingly hit on the happy idea of sending the following telegram to the Stock Exchange in New York: "When the British Fleet sails into New York harbour, please see it is not interfered with by excursion steamers." This message is said to have done much towards aiding the American public to see things in their proper proportions. The excitement gradually subsided and Lord Salisbury found a way out of the difficulty.

Thus a trivial matter produced, and another trivial matter removed or helped in removing, a risk of war between two great nations. That there was a risk seems indicated by the fact that the scare caused a fall of \$400,000,000 in the value of American securities. The little joke from the London Stock Exchange was one that led people to use their reason. It did this without making any individual look foolish. Had it been malicious or personal it might have had a very different effect.

An instance of national feeling exhibited in America now claims our attention.

On January 16, 1917, the German Foreign Office

despatched a telegram to von Eckhardt, their representative in Mexico, in which orders were given that if America entered the war, an effort should be made to induce Japan to desert her allies and join with Mexico in an attack on the United States. The letter contained an assertion that is very difficult to believe—namely, that the German Government promised that, if this was done, Mexico should receive as a reward, after peace was declared, the states of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico.

The effect of this telegram that deserves our attention is the national feeling that it aroused in America, especially in the Western States. The sinking of the *Lusitania* in the month of May, 1915 had failed to have any such effect in those States, though it had produced much indignation in the eastern parts of America. But the preposterous proposal to hand over important parts of American territory to Mexico, instead of being treated, as it deserved, as a subject for ridicule, was regarded and resented as an insult to national dignity. The result was that when war was declared on Germany by America, on April 6, 1917, President Wilson had the mass of the nation solidly behind him. It is possible that this telegram also influenced the American Government. Mr. W. H. Page, the American Ambassador in England, in a letter written at the time, questioned whether it was not as much this telegram as the renewal of U-boat warfare that finally led President Wilson to decide on war.\*

The foregoing instances of outbursts of national feeling give us an insight into its nature. It is noteworthy that in every instance in which it is aroused it involves a desire for war or a threat of war or preparations for war.

Let us consider how national feeling is likely to have arisen. Even in the days before storage of food was invented, a *sine qua non* for the survival of a tribe was

\* *Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, by B. J. Hendrick (W. Heinemann, 1924), Vol. II, p. 214.

that it should be able to maintain its hold on the lands from which it drew its subsistence. Any threat to the integrity of its claim to this land must have aroused resentment and alarm. Readiness to feel such resentment and to be spurred to action by it is likely to have tended to increase one's chances of survival. It is probable that our early human forefathers inherited from their animal ancestors a desire to repel with fury any trespasser on tribal land. The development of human intelligence, with its increased powers of realizing, is likely here to have played a part, in that not only trespass but even the threat of trespass may have caused resentment and alarm. This, it may be suggested, is a likely basis for national feeling. Another part of this feeling is likely to have been a sense of satisfaction in the undisputed ownership of tribal territory. Any acquisition of new territory, with its prospective additions to food resources, is likely to have been a source of pride and pleasure. This trait appears to have persisted, and is probably the reason for the satisfaction felt by so many members of civilized races in the gain by their country of fresh colonies. Some such explanation seems to be needed to explain the process by which some explorer, having found an island inhabited by head-hunting savages and having hoisted his country's flag on it, succeeds in persuading his government to send out a staff of officials to administer this new addition to their territory. The dislike of such acquisitions, and the desire to return them to their original owners, that so many people now feel, perhaps may not be so entirely the result of their benevolent feelings as they suppose. As suggested in the last chapter, the desire may be, at least to some extent, due to a counterpart feeling such as we have met with in so many other instances.

Let us return to the question of the nature of national feeling. A tribe surrounded by hostile tribes would be less liable to be attacked if its neighbours had a high opinion

of its strength and fighting powers and of the sagacity and determination of its rulers. Thus it would have a better chance of surviving if it was alert to any threat to its dignity in these respects. Such alertness may be the reason why national feeling is so readily aroused by any threat to the dignity of a government.

National feeling is something more than a desire to defend one's country from attack. The historian Lecky describes "the spirit of patriotism in its relation with others"—which is much the same as what we have described as national feeling—as "a spirit of constant and jealous self-assertion." This description is very apt. Nationalism is a kind of self-assertion. It is not personal self-assertion. It may properly be designated as "national self-assertion." That it deserves this description is no theory. It is, as the foregoing examples prove, a matter of fact. Several of the instances quoted of manifestations of national feeling have features that remind one of an inferiority complex. In each instance the national feeling exhibited was an attempt at national self-assertion. In the preceding chapter we found occasion to quote from others and to use the term "national self-respect." This was stated to depend on confidence in the well-being and security of one's nation. National self-assertion is the exact antithesis of this feeling. It is national feeling in which confidence is replaced by lack of confidence. Consequently there is resentment at a suggestion of inferiority, and it is likely that this resentment originated owing to fear that one's nation if not respected would be liable to be attacked.

National self-assertion is not a gradual development owing to long-continued and ill-advised teaching of either the journalist or the schoolmaster. The proof of this is that the change from national self-respect to national self-assertion may, as in the above quoted instances, be almost instantaneous.

In nationalism we are not dealing simply with a change from personal self-respect to personal self-assertion, as may occur to anybody in his relations with his neighbours. Nationalism is self-assertion of that redoubtable being, "the cave-man within us." This is the reason why nationalism may carry us far beyond the discontent engendered by an inferiority complex. It may lead us to frenzied conduct in which all ideas of prudence, of humanity, or of reason fall into abeyance. It may lead to conduct more hazardous to the safety or comfort of the individual than any that can result from the urge of our most vital instincts.

It appears from the foregoing that the evolution of mutual tolerance between the nations of Europe has not kept pace with the evolution of good manners between man and man. The attitude of one nation towards another recalls the state of society portrayed in the stories of the *Nibelungenlied*. The readiness of Nibelungen heroes to take offence, the resentment of any threat to their security or dignity, their anger at any suggestion of lack of courage or readiness to fight is evidence of a condition of mind recalling the "constant and jealous self-assertion" of Lecky's description of patriotism in its relation to other nations.

This Nibelungen mentality resembles those influences from the past that have been considered in earlier chapters of this book. It may remain latent for generations and then burst into full activity on the coming of a suitable stimulus. In different cases widely different proportions of members of the community may be affected.

Very little good—perhaps no good—is likely to result from preaching against this Nibelungen mentality. We must recognize it as a source of a bias in political affairs to which the great majority of the inhabitants of Europe are subject. What the Kaiser calls vital questions of national honour are vital because of this Nibelungen bias.

These questions are not the less vital because they may fail to satisfy reason as understood by our twentieth-century mentality. It is not by declamation or by expressing dislike of this bias that we may hope to avoid the difficulties and dangers to which it threatens to lead us from time to time. As we shall see in the next chapter, we may hope to avoid these dangers by recognizing their nature and by employing the same measures against them as are used by psychologists in dealing with analogous disturbances of mental equilibrium.

Since writing the preceding paragraphs, a book of reminiscences has come into my hands in which the author, Mr. B. T. Reynolds, who has recently spent several years in Germany, after describing the Germans as a pleasant and friendly folk, goes on to say that "the German has a vivid imagination. The saga of the *Nibelungenlied* really means something to him, and I would strongly advise anyone to read it who really wants to understand something of the hidden springs from which the German might act at moments of crisis." \*

The old Prussian saying that "the more enemies the more honour" is of interest in that it has every appearance of having been transmitted unchanged from *Nibelungen* times. It suggests that the *Nibelungen* mentality, however much it may resemble an inferiority complex, was something more: it was a philosophy of life in which sentiment took precedence of intelligence.

The story of the *Nibelungenlied* is based on a battle against the Huns that occurred in the fifth century. The story was popular because the deeds of its heroes accorded with public opinion and feelings at the time. The danger that besets modern statesmanship is that, despite the help of their twentieth-century mentality, statesmen may fail to realize that in affairs in which the dignity of another

\* *Prelude to Hitler*, by B. T. Reynolds (Jonathan Cape, 1933), p. 262.

nation is concerned, they may have to deal with fifth-century mentality. A concession or course of conduct that would be approved by an opponent dominated by the twentieth-century mind might arouse suspicion or resentment or the desire for war if the opponent happens at the time to be under the influence of a mind resembling that of a Nibelungen hero.



## CHAPTER XII

### NATIONAL DIGNITY

DIFFICULTIES and misunderstandings of a serious nature result from ignorance of the nature of the bias that inevitably affects the judgment when the security of one's nation is threatened. Examples of this fact are to be found in the failure of various efforts of international co-operation. The Disarmament Conference, for example, appears to have been summoned on the assumption that as regards their political feelings human beings are completely rational. If we were entirely rational in our feelings towards other races, the talk about disarmament and the prospects of disarmament that have taken up so much space in the daily papers during the last few years, should have added enormously to the feeling of security between the nations. It is notorious that this has not happened. On the contrary, the answer to exhortations to disarm has often—perhaps usually—been plans for increase in military or naval preparations. That a real and serious difficulty militates against disarmament is indicated by the failure of the statesmen of the Versailles Conference to keep their promise to disarm when insisting on the disarmament of Germany. This failure supplies another ground for asserting that our minds are swayed by influences of which these statesmen took no account.

If we were completely rational, the prospect of the nations "beating their swords into ploughshares" would be welcomed as the way to lasting peace. This has not occurred, and consequently we have to consider the possibility that a bias exists in our minds in virtue of which

any suggestion of disarmament is regarded as a threat to national security. Any such threat must necessarily stimulate national self-assertion, and so lead to a demand for increase of military strength.

In order to place ourselves in a position to be able to judge the credibility of this idea, it is advisable to put on one side the question of disarmament for the time being and to give further attention to the nature of national feeling.

As has been shown in previous chapters, this feeling can exist in two forms—namely, as national self-respect or as national self-assertion. We have also seen that national self-respect makes for peace, while national self-assertion tends to war. The facts described in the last chapter leave no room for doubt that national self-assertion is not produced by excessive stimulation of national self-respect; it results from its transformation. The more national self-respect is stimulated the less is it likely to suffer change into national self-assertion. Thus the maintenance of national self-respect is the duty of statesmen for this reason, and also because it seems to act as a sort of tonic for the activities of a people and tends towards their happiness and contentment, and consequently towards the security of their government.

The close parallelism that we have found to exist between personal self-assertion and national self-assertion gives us a hint as to how the latter should be treated. We must employ measures closely similar to those employed by psychologists in dealing with an inferiority complex. These measures have been clearly and admirably explained by Dr. R. H. Thouless.\* He tells us that usually the sufferer may recover if he is taught to realize the nature of his trouble. He must be encouraged to get "a good conceit of himself" by keeping in his memory and

\* *The Control of the Mind*, by Dr. R. H. Thouless (Hodder & Stoughton), Chapters X and XI.

attention those qualities or achievements in which he is superior to his neighbours. He must be taught to have a standard of conduct that satisfies himself irrespective of the opinions of others. He must learn to regard his own opinion of himself as more important than that of other people.

The description of national self-assertion as resembling an inferiority complex does not in any way conflict with the theory that in our attitude towards other nations we behave as if we had received our stock of feelings and desires at a time when our ancestors had the mentality of the heroes of the *Nibelungenlied*. These heroes suffered from a singular readiness to take offence at any threat to their security or at any insult to their dignity—a habit of mind that, when it occurs nowadays, is regarded as a result of an inferiority complex. With these heroes such readiness to take offence may have been almost a necessary condition of their existence. An alertness of this kind would be of the greatest advantage in a society in which individuals were frequently quarrelling with one another, and in which each community was often at war with its neighbours. Such alertness and readiness to take offence are obviously out of place in a society in which individuals have a greater desire for their peaceful avocations than for fighting. In Europe at the present day, individuals require peace, but in international affairs they are liable to be swayed by feelings that seem to have been transmitted to them from Nibelungen times. It is only when these feelings take the form of national self-respect that we may hope for long-sighted judgments in international relations.

Consequently the problem that confronts statesmen is how to avoid arousing national self-assertion of the kind that is or may be prompted by Nibelungen mentality. One must, however, distinguish from this the national self-assertion that is based on balanced judgment. For

example, if a man discovers that his talents or his wealth justify his holding a higher social position than he has held hitherto, his actions, though based on valid reasoning, may tend to resemble the self-assertion of the sufferer from an inferiority complex. Such balanced judgment may be the source of efforts to increase the appearance of national dignity that have been indulged in by certain statesmen in recent years.

Let us now consider national self-assertion in its objectionable form. We may compare it with personal self-assertion. Supposing a man shows symptoms of this mental disposition by spending more money than he can afford on expensive clothes in order to keep up appearances, it would not be wise to advise him to disarm himself of his apparel and wear no clothes at all. If indeed we could persuade him to go naked and not to mind what others thought of his appearance, that would be a cure of the trouble for the time being. His propensity to care what others thought of him, though quieted by our reasoning, would still be there. It would be liable, at any moment, to break out into activity, to dominate his judgment, and perhaps also, owing to shame at what he had done, to make his condition worse than it was before. The proper mode of treating such an individual would be to advise him not to worry about what others think of his appearance, but to have a certain standard of respectability that he should set for himself, and to live up to it. We should, in other words, attempt to cure his self-assertion by stimulating his self-respect. Similarly, in dealing with national self-assertion, it would not be wise to advise the patient to strip himself bare of all feelings that are included in the conception of patriotism. A due stimulation of national self-respect will undoubtedly be the safest and most practical way of dealing with national self-assertion. The patient must follow such conduct as makes for national dignity.

There is another reason for such a procedure. Underlying national self-assertion is a desire to show one's strength, and the source of this desire is fear of what others might do if one did not show one's strength. Thus the desire for national self-assertion is connected with an unexpressed and perhaps unfelt national depreciation. A man may be cured of a habit of self-depreciation by being encouraged to pay attention to those of his acquirements in which he is superior to his neighbours. Similarly national depreciation may be combated by suitable recognition of achievements of one's fellow citizens. Examples of such recognition are given by the rejoicings that took place throughout Germany when a German liner made a record passage across the Atlantic, and again when a German airship accomplished an epoch-making flight round the world. To belittle or decry such rejoicings on the ground that they are manifestations of narrow patriotism would be entirely wrong. Such rejoicings are on the side of peace because they tend to increase German national self-respect. If my memory is not at fault, the above-mentioned liner, when she came into Southampton at the end of her record trip, had on her side a large placard with the inscription "Made in Germany." This was a very fair retort to the adverse opinion as to the quality of German goods that at that time was widely held in England. It is also to be commended as an excellent advertisement of German manufactures. But it is well to remember that it was not the important part of this record voyage in regard to German national self-respect. The real stimulus to such self-respect is not triumphing over enemies, but realizing the extent of one's own achievement. In all national celebrations and festivals, national dignity is best served if all reference to enemies or rivals is omitted.

If a man has no fear of his neighbours, the customs of his country will impel him to take certain measures for

security. He will, for instance, conform to custom by locking his front door at night. His conduct in matters of this kind will be dignified and rational. But if a man lives in fear of his neighbours, or if he imagines that they have a bad opinion of him and if he resents such opinion, his self-respect may change more or less completely into self-assertion. His policy towards his neighbours will be dictated by fear or resentment. The measures he will take to ensure his security or to assert his position will be wanting in dignity. He will no longer be able to distinguish between what is suitable and what is unsuitable and undignified in his conduct. He will rush to conclusions too quickly, appreciating immediate results and not realizing ulterior results. One may anticipate that the policy of a nation that is unduly concerned about the opinion held of it by neighbouring nations will have analogous defects.

All available evidence seems to indicate that patriotic feeling originated in connection with a desire for secure possession of the land belonging to the community. This desire for national security still exists. It is probably the chief factor involved in the two different manifestations of national feeling. With an individual the feeling of security comes both from having strength and also from the absence of any suggestion that this strength is not appreciated by others. If it is not appreciated his security is lessened, because he is the more liable to be attacked. Hence lack of appreciation of his strength by others may be regarded as an indirect threat to his security. That exactly similar relations hold in the intercourse of nations is amply proved by the instances of national self-assertion that were described and explained in Chapter XII. Every one of these instances was resentment at either a direct or else at an indirect threat to national security. Anything that diminishes a nation's sense of security must inevitably tend to change its self-respect into self-

assertion. Herein lies the difficulty that surrounds proposals of disarmament. No doubt, if it were possible, the total disarmament of all nations would be the best means of security against war. But there is something in the minds of statesmen, something that comes from a distant past, that demands and is satisfied only by actual armaments.

The disarmament of their foes by the Allies at the end of the war was necessary as a military precaution. But the attempt to make this state of disarmament permanent has proved a most serious mistake. It has been a constant insult to their national self-respect, with the inevitable result of stimulating the desire for national self-assertion.

It is often stated that, if disarmament proposals fail, another European war is inevitable. This is an opinion that has been arrived at in complete ignorance of the relation between national self-respect and the feeling of national security, and also without sufficient consideration of the meaning of military preparations. To say that there would be no war if there were no armies is a statement that, however true it may be, has no relation to practical affairs. The danger to be guarded against is not the large armies, but the state of mind that results in a desire to use them. This state of mind is national self-assertion, which is usually, if not always, the result of direct or indirect threats to national security. Obviously this mental disposition cannot be combated by decreasing the strength of a nation's defences. The difficulty that surrounds every attempt at general disarmament seems to be due to the fact that even the threat of it produces a feeling of insecurity and thereby stimulates the state of mind that it is desired to allay. Disarmament would be admirable if it fulfilled certain conditions. One of these is its being carried out without this threat to security. Any attempt to coerce other nations into signing covenants for reduction of their armed forces seems foredoomed to failure. The more insistent the request and the more elaborate the

arguments by which it is supported, the more likely is it to have undesired consequences.

In present circumstances the demand for disarmament, if it is to succeed, needs to be accompanied by some arrangement that will produce security in place of the security that it takes away. It is hopeless to effect this by any direct measure of disarmament. The only practicable means of insuring against war is for each nation to have such regard for national dignity, whether of its own or of that of other nations, as will best maintain national self-respect. National dignity gets no help from current peace propaganda. The professing of high moral principles, or dissertations on the irrationality of war, or peremptory orders to stop fighting are of as little use in protecting a nation from the dangers of war as would be similar measures in an uncivilized community in protecting a man from aggression by his neighbours.

What are we to understand by the term "national dignity"? In the first place let us consider what is meant by personal dignity. It is behaviour that conduces to self-respect, and this, as we have seen, consists in following a standard of conduct that each man chooses for himself. It is a standard that has some regard for the feelings and happiness of others, but yet is something more than a fear of what others may think or do if one fails to conform to it. This standard may have originated from fear of others, but nowadays deserves to be termed dignified only if it is followed to please oneself and not primarily from such fear. Let us take an illustration. Many years ago I remember having in my hand a club of a particular pattern that was awarded as a decoration to any member of a certain tribe as soon as he had committed three murders. Perhaps the owner of such a club would carry it in public as a warning to his neighbours that he was a difficult man to deal with. It may be suggested that the carrying of this murder club for such a reason does not



deserve to be described as dignified conduct. Supposing, on the other hand, that the owner of the club carried it not because he wished to impress his neighbours, but because his feeling of self-respect made him desire to follow an established custom; then, it may be suggested, his conduct would deserve to be described as dignified.

In the same way, national self-respect may be said to depend on the standard habitually followed and approved by the general public of each nation, a standard that is their own and that is not merely dictated by fear of their neighbours. The conforming to such a standard may properly be described as the maintenance of national dignity. Such standards of conduct probably originated chiefly from a fear of neighbouring nations, or from a wish to harm them or to be in a position to be able to harm them. If the civilized nations of to-day understood the nature of national dignity, such fears and wishes would have been replaced by a due regard for the susceptibilities of others. But little progress has yet been made in this direction.

It is much to be desired that criticism of Herr Hitler for the unilateral abrogation of certain clauses of the Versailles Peace Treaty should be tempered by recognition of the fact that he has been and is fighting for German national dignity. The fault lies, not with the German Government, but with the Allies, who forced on Germany conditions inconsistent with her national self-respect. The seeds of future wars are to be found in treaties drawn up without regard to the persistent modes of thought that dominate the intercourse of nations.

Facts described in the preceding chapter led us to the conclusion that national self-assertion is a frame of mind that is aroused by threats to national security. We have arrived at the conclusion that a feeling of security is necessary for the maintenance of national self-respect. Consequently national dignity demands the possession of

strength that in public  
enemies unwilling to attack it. Accord-  
ports, the Disarmament Conference has proposed  
and presumably to publish, tabular statements showing  
the military strength of each nation. The disadvantages  
of such a scheme do not seem to have been sufficiently  
considered. Precise data as to the strength of neigh-  
bouring nations would furnish precise arguments to the  
military party for adding to the strength of the army.  
The result would inevitably be a competition in armaments.  
Further, any publication of this kind would seriously  
impair the function of the army in producing the sense of  
security. The public would be likely to be regaled with  
such extracts from military statistics as the newspapers  
regarded as sensationally interesting. These might be  
printed side by side with similar extracts from the military  
statistics of their neighbours. War nervousness would  
thereby be stimulated. Such publication would tend to  
replace, and even to render impossible, that sense of

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... nature of national feeling that we  
... allied makes it obvious that there is need for  
... extension of the activities of the League of Nations  
in the following respects :

(1) A committee is needed to investigate the nature of  
so-called " vital questions of national honour."

It is a matter of fact rather than of theory that our  
ancestors—that is to say, the ancestors of the more  
vigorous races of mankind—have passed through a period  
of intense pugnacity. During this time they appear to  
have been dominated by what we may call the Nibelungen  
mentality. In a society in which every man is liable to  
be attacked by his neighbours on the most trivial  
grounds, a readiness to resent any imputation against his  
strength or his courage would be an advantage and is  
likely to have been a normal part of his mental outfit. He  
would therefore live in a state of " constant and jealous  
self-assertion." It is then likely to have been a matter

of personal honour with our distant ancestors to demand due respect for their power and courage. We have seen that such feelings in our ancestors have effects that may be transmitted to their descendants. It is reasonable to invoke such transmission as the source of the singular resentment usually felt by the public of any nation when its armed strength is criticized either by prominent individuals or by the press of another nation. Examples of resentment of this kind produced in England by foreign comments on the Boer War and the Jameson Raid have been described in an earlier chapter. My readers can readily recall instances of similar resentment being aroused in the same way in other nations.

That questions of national honour have the source here indicated is also made probable by what they omit. Our Nibelungen ancestor knew nothing of finance. If national feeling was liable to be aroused by an action that harms the investing public, it would certainly be awakened if other nations borrowed their money and then repudiated the debt. Such repudiation has happened, but it has never given rise to any trace of national feeling. The Nibelungen man knew nothing of international commerce. If national feeling was liable to be aroused by harm done by hostile tariffs, then the events of recent years would have furnished abundant reasons for outbreaks of war. No outbursts of national feeling ever seem to have been caused directly in this way, though such outbursts may easily arise as a secondary result of a war begun from commercial motives.

(2) It is desirable that another committee should study means of promoting international good manners. The relation now shown to exist between national self-respect and national self-assertion emphasizes the urgency of this problem. It is now clear that any foreign policy that insults the national self-respect of another nation is to be deprecated. The reason for this is that any such insult

tends to change national self-respect into national self-assertion, with its constant dreaming of war and its demands for further armaments. The problem is not so simple as it would be if each statesman had to deal with an opponent dominated entirely by twentieth-century mentality. There is an influence from the past with which we have to reckon. It is an influence that prompts a jealous regard for national self-respect and national security. We have to face the fact that this influence behaves as if, when statesmen are dealing with other nations, a cave-man of Nibelungen mentality stands behind the chair of each of them. This imaginary cave-man, though playing a useful part as a rule, is unduly sensitive to any threat to national dignity or security. When this happens, he clouds the judgment of the statesman by arousing in his mind the bias of "constant and jealous self-assertion" of which we have already spoken. This bias may be difficult or impossible to appease by measures that would seem proper to a mind that was free from such influence. Generally speaking, in dealing with the wounded *amour propre* of the very touchy Nibelung mind, it is questionable whether any order, peremptory or otherwise, is the most suitable form of address.

In dealing with "vital questions of national honour," a more elaborate procedure seems to be needed. The object to be aimed at is to change national self-assertion into national self-respect. Hence it is of the first importance to pay ceremonious regard, even of an exaggerated kind, to the dignity of the offended nation. The matter is one that deserves serious consideration. Perhaps it might be found advisable for the League of Nations to employ envoys or delegations enjoying the respect that comes from having high salaries and resplendent uniforms. Perhaps other means may be found of making use of the impression that may be produced by love of ceremony and prescribed ritual. The remarkable success achieved by

the British in India in gaining the loyalty and affection of the native Princes is well worth attention and study. The method of intercourse with these Princes employed by Government has included as much attention to their dignity as to their security. It has included a strict regard for ceremonies, durbars, state arrivals, salutes, and uniforms.

It has often happened that statesmen, urged by a laudable desire to increase national dignity, have employed methods that must necessarily defeat their aim owing to their arousing national self-assertion instead of national self-respect. Mischances of this kind are the inevitable result of lack of knowledge of the relation between the two forms of national feeling.

A word may be added on "internationalism." This word is the name of a policy that has been recommended as a remedy for the present international disquiet, regardless of the fact that, as current events all too plainly show, nationalism is the strongest and most all-embracing motive in the intercourse of nations. It is a motive that shows no signs of dying away, but is one that appears to have been powerfully stimulated by the events of the last few years. The propaganda of internationalism has been harmful to national dignity through its disapproval of the use of national symbols, uniforms, and anthems. It has even been suggested by pacifists that the use of the national flag should be discouraged because it suggests battle and war and conquest. That it should do so is the result of suggestion, and is not inevitable. The national flag may be made to suggest love of one's country, preference for articles of home manufacture, and other equally desirable sentiments.

The advocates of internationalism have preached the necessity of developing a world-state if we would avoid war, after having been brought to this opinion by the complete failure of all their efforts towards disarmament.

They entirely over-estimate their powers of persuasion if they think there is any chance of mastering the sentiment of nationalism by such doctrines. They under-estimate the desire for home rule that is possessed by the great majority of individuals of almost every race. Such desire militates against the establishment of any such world-order, and is likely to do so for many years to come. Those advanced thinkers who feel themselves to be free of such desire should realize that they are a very small minority of the population.

The facts described in this and the preceding chapter show that efforts in the cause of peace have been gravely handicapped by lack of knowledge of the two-fold nature of national feeling. We now realize that the efforts towards disarmament have been of a kind that must inevitably produce effects exactly contrary to what is desired. It is needless to look farther for an explanation of the spread of war anxiety during recent years while the agitation for disarmament has been so much before the public.

Application of the knowledge we now possess of the nature of national feeling is likely to diminish, and perhaps even to abolish, such outbreaks of war as are due to national self-assertion; with the help of such knowledge it should be easy to avoid arousing this form of national feeling.

Another possible source of war or of warlike feelings is presented by threats to national security.

Human nature being what it is, armed forces must be retained to ensure the feeling of security that is indispensable for national self-respect. Without such feeling of security, national self-respect changes into, or tends to change into, national self-assertion.

A condition hostile to the feeling of national security is the existence of discontinuous frontiers in those instances in which passage from one part of the nation's territory to

the other is through a narrow corridor that is subject to the control of another Power. Such a condition will inevitably be felt as a threat to that nation's security. Reasoning to the contrary will be of little avail, for statesmen, in the intercourse of nations, are subject to a bias that comes from a part of the mind that lies outside the ego-consciousness of the individual. This part of the mind, with its Nibelungen mentality and its readiness to over-estimate danger, is likely to react to a threat to security with a desire for larger armaments than would be wished for if this supposed threat to security did not exist. Statesmen are likely to find reasons for such desire by a process of rationalization. The original source of the desire is likely to remain unknown to them, or, if known, its importance may be underestimated; for, as we have seen, our minds are frequently influenced by desires, the reasons for which are unknown to the individual consciousness. Owing to its nature, the desire for larger armaments is not one that is likely to be allayed by treaties or pacts. Either the provision of such armaments or territorial changes may be required.

If the discussion in the last few paragraphs covers all the relevant factors, it should be easy to guard against outbreaks of war between the civilized nations of Europe and America. But it remains for us to consider whether there is anything resembling an instinctive impulse that might make occasional outbreaks of war inevitable even if the dangers from national self-assertion can be avoided. Some evidence bearing on this possibility will be discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XIII

### IS THE LOSS OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS CONNECTED WITH RACIAL DEGENERATION?

THE desires that maintain persistent customs furnished our ancestors with many motives for exertion, with enthusiasms, and even with frenzied activity. We have in great part lost, and we are likely in the future to lose still more of these incentives to exertion. We have to consider the possibility that such loss, whatever its advantages, may be accompanied by ill-effects.

Of all the persistent customs followed by our ancestors, those connected with war were probably the most efficient as stimuli to exertion. It is possible that with our ancestors the latent desire for war occasionally came to the surface and demanded indulgence. This happens with some of the lower races of to-day; an instance may be quoted. The cannibal tribes of Malekula in the New Hebrides, according to Miss Cheesman, at certain times "are obliged by an instinctive urge to kill; an ancient feud is only dug up for the occasion as an excuse. They deliberately work themselves up to a passion of blood lust, and are mad for the time being; they then carry out a raid, kill, sing, dance, eat, and are sated. The passion, being satisfied, dies out, and they become ordinary men again." These raids are purely an indulgence of cannibal frenzy. They have no connection with head-hunting. A similar liability to cannibal frenzy exists in Papua. A Papuan chief, who had been made prisoner owing to an act of cannibalism, made an offer to his captor to the effect that "I promise to dance a great deal and eat a great deal of pig and not kill man any more. Then

will you let me go? " Miss Cheesman points out the psychological interest of this offer. The chief felt the urge to his usual form of war as an outlet for pent-up energy, and suggested that it might be satisfied by dancing and eating.\*

In view of such evidence, it is reasonable to ask whether any trace of a periodically recurring bias in favour of war persists in the minds of any individuals of the civilized races of to-day.

Another question that demands an answer is whether complete and permanent abstention from war could have any detrimental effect? The late Professor Graham Wallas, who was well known both as a Socialist writer and as a psychologist, tells us that children in charity schools, if brought up entirely without any personal property, may show "every sign of the bad effect on health and character which results from complete inability to satisfy a strong inherited instinct."† In an earlier chapter reasons have been brought forward for believing that the desire for personal property as it exists in man has the character of a persistent mode of thought rather than those of an instinct. If non-indulgence in one persistent mode of thought has ill effects on health, may not non-indulgence of another—namely, of the customs of warfare—also have untoward consequences? Graham Wallas has suggested that in a Socialist State it is possible that the desire to accumulate property may be sufficiently indulged by collecting picture postcards or postage stamps. Similarly there is the possibility that, if we have any latent desire for combat, it may be satisfied by watching a football match or other form of competition.

That abstention from the form of war that exists in Papua is not without ill-effects has been suggested by

\* *The Two Roads of Papua*, by Evelyn Cheesman, F.R.Z.S., F.Z.S. (Jarrolds, London, 1935), p. 217, and *Backwaters of the Savage South Seas* (Jarrolds, 1933), by the same author, p. 16.

† *Human Nature in Politics* (Constable, 1910), p. 36.

Miss Cheesman. According to her, " Even such things as raiding and cannibalism have a distinct value in producing efficiency in a tribe; there is a very great deal of evidence to show that when forced to give up what to us are hideous customs there is nothing to take their place and the racial vitality suffers in consequence." \* The evidence here referred to is to the effect that sudden cessation of warlike habits has been followed by loss of racial vitality. Supposing the implication that the change of 'custom was the cause of this loss is correct, it does not follow that such a result must always follow. Evidence to the contrary is available. The ancestors of the civilized races of Europe and America, as we have seen, were cannibals, and presumably used to devour their enemies. But their descendants of to-day have outgrown this form of war, and the change has been accompanied by racial progress rather than by degeneration.

The following instance of racial degeneration after the adoption of pacifist principles is well worthy of attention. At some time in the past, perhaps so long as fifteen hundred years ago, a chief, whose name " Tamakohuruhura " may be conveniently abbreviated to " Tamako," was living at Maketu near the coast of the Bay of Plenty on the northern island of New Zealand. It is probable that, like other New Zealand warriors of the time, he was elaborately tattooed and also that he had the habit of eating his enemies. The only known record of his conduct that throws any light on his character is to the effect that he murdered his wife and hid her body in a tree. His crime was discovered. The father of the woman sought revenge and a war resulted. Tamako fought desperately, but was defeated, and his tribe, the Moriori, was nearly exterminated. Thereupon the survivors deserted their fatherland and fled to the Chatham Islands.

There then followed a period during which they lived

\* *The Two Roads of Papua*, p. 28.

without war, but yet retained the instinct for resisting aggression. At the end of this period, though still ready to resist an aggressor, they showed a dislike for cannibalism. In the circumstances this change affords a presumption of a decrease in warlike aptitudes. The unwritten history of the tribe includes a list of thirteen chiefs who ruled them successively during this time, and, as each must have succeeded to his position without fighting, there is a presumption that this period amounted to thirteen generations.

At the end of this period, three canoes of strangers arrived. They were cannibals. Fighting ensued and their leader was slain.

There then began a third period in their history during which time they lived peaceably and completely lost the instinct for resisting aggression. The consequences of this loss were, as we shall see, disastrous. Parenthetically it may here be remarked that the unwritten history of the tribe is a record of disaster throughout, and hence deserves more credence than would be the case if it consisted of boasting of the deeds of their ancestors.

At the beginning of this third period of their history, the descendants of Tamako were ruled by a chief named Nunuku, who is said to have lived about a thousand years ago. "He established the law that men should cease to slay one another at the time when man-eating was prevalent consequent to the coming to these islands of the warrior-like Moe and his tribe the Te Rauru in the canoe Oropuke." Nunuku taught that "even if blood be shed no one must be put to death," a dictum that gives a hint that either the blood-feud or capital punishment had previously existed. Nunuku preached a doctrine of universal benevolence.

His doctrine had an extraordinary success. Not only did the whole of his tribe acquire a high standard of ethics; they also lost completely the instinct for resisting

aggression. For when, in 1835, they were invaded by the Maoris and the question arose whether it would be right for them to resist this attack, a meeting was called, and, despite the wishes of some of the younger men, the advice of the elders was followed, and they decided to adhere to their pacifist principles. Consequently a number of them were killed and eaten. This number is said to have amounted to 216 persons. More would have been killed had it not been for the interference of the missionaries.

A further proof of the loss of the aggression-resisting instinct is shown by the fact that, as recorded by Captain Mair on his visit to them in 1864, the natives showed a complete absence of bitterness when pointing out to him "the scenes of the actual tragedy, with the cooking-ovens and skulls bearing bullet and tomahawk wounds and the larger bones broken and split for the marrow." These relics were not those of distant ancestors, but of parents or their acquaintances, or possibly of grandparents of his guides. Captain Mair describes the mental attitude of these guides as "sweet reasonableness." Surely a more suitable description would be abnormal callousness!

Other changes in the habits and mental aptitudes of the Moriori took place during this period.

They had discontinued the practice of tattooing, perhaps disliking an ornament that had been recognized as the mark of a warrior.

They gave up weaving, a change that suggests a decrease of mental energy or of manual dexterity. Previously they had used woven garments. These were replaced by clothes made from seal skins for the chiefs, while the lower classes contented themselves with mats plaited from fibres obtained from the leaves of an aloe-like plant that was used by them as a substitute for flax.

They showed a loss of fertility. In 1852 their numbers were 946 males and 727 females. In the year 1868 only a

few hundreds were left. They are now extinct. The last pure-bred survivor died in 1933.

Captain Mair describes them as "starved, heart-broken, disease-stricken, and hope-bereft."\* The use of such terms affords evidence that both their mental energy and their powers of resisting disease were of a low order.

From all these facts it is clear that we are dealing with an instance of racial degeneration.

It would be strange if the events of the migration had no effect on the minds of the fugitives. The success of Nunuku's teaching affords a reason for suspecting that this happened. How otherwise can we explain the conversion of a hundred per cent. of his congregation? It is impossible to believe that his eloquence alone could destroy such a deep-seated instinct as that for resisting aggression. An alternative view is that Nunuku's teaching was merely the outward expression of a gradually developing change in the mentality of his tribe, a process that had begun before him and that was destined to continue after his death. It may be suggested that the flight of Nunuku's ancestors from their fatherland resulted in a conflict in their minds between the desire to regain what they had lost and the instinct for self-preservation, and also that this conflict was at length assuaged by the mental process known as rationalization, a process by which the cowardice shown on the occasion of their flight came to be regarded as a virtue. It may be suggested also that the comparative failure of other reformers to

\* The source of this information about the Moriori is a book by Captain Gilbert Mair entitled *Reminiscences and Maori Stories* (Brett Printing and Publishing Company, Auckland, 1923). This contains quotations from a narrative drawn up by the elders of the tribe at Wharekauri in 1852. The unwritten history of this tribe was extensive. One member of it could recite the names of his ancestors for 180 generations; another for 133 generations. Captain Mair mentions another New Zealand tribe that also had extensive memories of their past.

promulgate such doctrines was owing to the lack of any such conflict in the minds of their audience.

It must then be admitted that there is room for the suspicion that the circumstances of Tomako's flight had some effect on the mentality of his tribe that was inimical to their progress and well-being. But this is merely a suspicion. We are dealing with an instance of racial degeneration, such as has been observed with many other savage races and for which no similar explanation is available. The Moriori after their flight found themselves in a comparatively sterile and treeless country.\* Perhaps their life under the resulting hard conditions had more to do with their fate than abstinence from the custom of war.

The story of the Moriori affords no reason for asserting or for suspecting that occasional indulgence in war is necessary for the well-being of civilized races, for the following reasons. These races are free from any desire to eat their enemies. They have no desire to torture enemy prisoners to death or to build pyramids with the heads of the slain. Having lost desires of such kinds civilized races merely use war as a means to an end. They can choose the means. They may indulge in large-scale massacre of their opponents in battle, or their warfare may be ameliorated into dropping bombs on villages after the inhabitants have had warning to get to a place of safety. The fact that choice is possible between such differing means gives ample reason for asserting that no one of them is based on any quasi-instinctive urge. On the other hand, civilized races have a quasi-instinctive urge to resent and take measures against incidents that are harmful to their national self-respect. The means they employ to achieve this end may, as we have said, be the

\* There were no trees in the Chatham Islands at the time of the arrival of the Moriori, according to an article in the *Auckland Weekly News* of March 22, 1933.

slaughter of their opponents on the field of battle, or it may be the dropping of bombs on empty villages. But civilized races are not confined to such means. Our comprehension of the twofold nature of national feeling puts us in a position, in most cases at least, to maintain our own national self-respect without recourse to war. Of more importance is the fact that this comprehension will enable us to avoid measures that, though conceived in the supposed interests of peace, may harm the national self-respect of others. We now realize that statesmen, far from insisting on disarmament, must recognize the fact that readiness to fight in defence of the nation's rights is essential for its self-respect. If this is militarism it is militarism without war. Its likely alternative is pacifism without peace.



## CHAPTER XIV

### ANALOGUES OF PERSISTENT CUSTOMS IN ANIMALS

HOWEVER satisfactory it may be, from the practical standpoint, to be able to trace motives for our conduct in the experiences of our distant human ancestors, our investigation is unsatisfactory from the scientific point of view, in that it has, as yet, thrown no light on the means of transmission of these influences from the past. Ordinary inheritance, tradition, and suggestion seem alike incapable of affording a satisfactory explanation. In the present and the next chapter a possible means of this transmission from the past will be suggested.

Let us begin by seeking for analogies of persistent customs in animals.

The desires by which persistent customs are maintained have three noteworthy features. First, they may give rise to frenzied conduct of no apparent practical utility. Secondly, they may affect only a part of the population, a feature in which they differ from recognized instincts. Thirdly, they may affect conduct periodically or at more or less definite intervals.

If an animal offered us an example of abnormal conduct recurring at intervals measured in years, resembling a mad frenzy and affecting only a part of the population, we should have a phenomenon resembling a persistent custom. Such a phenomenon would be of importance because, among other reasons, it could not be explained as being due either to tradition or to suggestion. Striking instances of behaviour of this kind are to be found in the facts of mass emigration among various species of animals

and insects. The term "mass emigration" has been employed by Heape to designate movements in which a large number of individuals leave their normal habitat without making any attempt to return. He reserves the term "migration" for those seasonal movements that are followed by a return to the starting point.\*

In the case of a persistent custom, affecting only a small part of the community, it is conceivable that the underlying desire comes to the affected individuals by inheritance, and that such inheritance occurs only in a few families. In the case of mass emigrations this explanation completely fails to fit the facts, for the individuals who emigrate perish and it is the small part of the population that is left behind, apparently unaffected by the impulse, who produce descendants who in some later generation are destined to emigrate to their doom. Let us consider the facts.

We will begin with the springbuck, an animal living in Bushmanland, an arid desert country of South Africa. At long intervals—perhaps of ten or twenty years—it undergoes an increase in numbers. Then it collects into large herds which, after a period of aimless wandering, suddenly, throughout an area of many hundreds of square miles, start travelling to the west. When they arrive at the limit of their normal habitat they reach a range of mountains. This does not stop them. They go on, and eighty miles farther they reach the sea. Impelled by their mad frenzy, they plunge in and are drowned. It is recorded that, on one occasion, the sea shore at high-water mark was edged by an embankment made of their dead bodies that had been thrown up by the waves. This was found to extend for a distance of thirty miles along the beach.†

\* *Emigration, Migration, and Nomadism*, by W. Heape (Heffer, Cambridge, 1931), p. 74.

† *Ibid.*, by Walter Heape, p. 106.

As some individuals remain behind, apparently unaffected by the desire to travel, it is difficult to regard this impulse as innate. It has been suggested that those who remain behind have been lucky enough to find a food supply that the others have overlooked. This is purely a theory, and not a probable one. It might suffice for animals that live underground in burrows and that are unable to see far. But springbuck can see to a distance and they constantly move about. Hence it is probable that a gradually increasing difficulty in finding food is experienced by every member of the community. In view of their wandering habits, it seems unlikely that any group of individuals could, for a period of weeks or months, succeed in finding a satisfying amount of food while others were hungry.

Why should the emigration always be to the west? It appears to be a very general rule, according to Heape, that animals respect territorial rights. Hence it has been suggested that the fact of other species of antelopes living in districts to north, east, and south of the home of the springbuck is the reason why the emigration is to the west. It can scarcely be supposed that each individual springbuck migrates to the west because it knows that some other species of animal lives a hundred or two hundred miles away in these other directions and would resent the intrusion. The suggestion must in consequence be to the effect that the impulse to emigrate to the west is an instinct, and that it has been so evolved because it is usual for animals to respect the territorial rights of others. But such an explanation is attended with grave difficulties, for it is the individuals who remain unaffected by the impulse who perpetuate the species. Those who are affected by it are drowned.\*

\* This was pointed out by C. B. Williams in the case of similar phenomena presented by emigrating butterflies, and described in his book *The Migration of Butterflies* (Oliver & Boyd, 1930), p. 411.

The impulse to emigrate and to commit suicide in consequence of such emigration is not a tendency only : it is an overwhelming desire. Either the individual behaves as if completely unaffected, or it emigrates the whole distance to the sea and perishes. There are no records of any individuals travelling part of the way, then thinking better of it and returning home. The desire has an "all or none" effect.

Very similar phenomena of emigration are presented by lemmings, locusts, and certain butterflies and moths.

Of these we may here mention the Painted Lady Butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*). Its distribution is almost world-wide. Certain of those members of the species who live in Africa are apt to appear in swarms having a tendency to emigrate in a northerly direction. They cross the Mediterranean, settle in various countries in Southern Europe, and lay their eggs. The descendants coming from these eggs retain the tendency to emigrate. They do so, flying more often in a direction between west and north than otherwise. Some may reach England, and others get even as far as Iceland. In England they may breed, but always, within a year or two, they become extinct.

The lemmings, small rodents living in Norway, when affected by the desire to travel, may halt in the valleys to which they descend from their mountain homes. They there breed, but still the urge to travel affects them, and at length, sometimes after a journey of a hundred miles, they reach the sea and are drowned.

In every instance of these mass emigrations some individuals remain unaffected. Those who come under the sway of the impulse perish. Those who do not come under its sway remain behind and breed, leading to individuals whose descendants, in some later generation, produce individuals who suffer from the emigration impulse.

It is not easy to understand how any physical or climatic change can explain certain instances of periodicity in the emigrations of insects. Let us take an example.

A moth, *Alabama argillacea*, normally lives in South or Central America. At irregular intervals it emigrates into the Southern States of North America. There its larvæ feed on cotton. After two or three generations, rapidly produced, it dies out completely. Sometimes, before dying out, swarms of this insect travel farther north, even reaching the borders of Canada. Such emigrations have no direct effect on the survival of this insect, for the emigrating moths find themselves in countries in which food-plants for their caterpillars are completely lacking. Some outbreaks of this moth in the southern states are of abnormal intensity. These have occurred as follows :—

| Year. | Interval. |
|-------|-----------|
| 1783  | ..        |
| 1804  | 21 years  |
| 1825  | 21 „      |
| 1846  | 21 „      |
| 1868  | 22 „      |
| 1890  | 22 „      |
| 1911  | 21 „      |

Only one serious attack that does not fit into the series has been recorded. This happened in 1872-73.

It is difficult to imagine how such periodicity can be due to some climatic change occurring every twenty-one years. If this was the only known instance of swarming, some such explanation might appear feasible. But, as a matter of fact, a large number of different kinds of animals show periodical changes in fertility. If this always happened at intervals of twenty-one years, one might reasonably suspect the climate. But the intervals are different with different species. Supposing in any particular instance a periodically recurring meteorological change

was found occurring simultaneously with a change of fertility in some animal or insect, additional evidence would be necessary before it would be safe to conclude that one phenomenon was the cause of the other.

We may conclude from these facts relating to mass emigration that man is not alone in being subject to impulses that are not easy to explain as being transmitted from one generation to another by inheritance.

The only explanation of such transmission that occurs to me is one of a very partial nature. It is that there is in each community a common substratum of mind that exists independently of the individual mind and that continues to exist despite the births and deaths of individuals. My suggestion is that this "communal mind" is the source of the desires in question. Such a theory is also needed to explain the super-individual guidance of individual activity that seems so often to occur in the behaviour of social animals and especially of insects. For example, the "spirit of the hive" so frequently invoked by Maeterlinck in his description of the habits of the bee, is, on this theory, an instance of the activity of the communal mind.\*

Any such evidence of the existence of the communal mind is inconclusive, because we cannot be sure that other possibilities are excluded. Also, if this source of scepticism could be disposed of, the difficulty would still remain as to how a mind that, on this hypothesis, exists originally apart from the individual, can come into relation with the individual and affect its conduct. As an illustration of what is meant by this statement, let us consider certain facts relating to bird migration.

With many species of migrating birds there is no room for doubt that the young ones find their way without help from their parents. That this is so is proved by the fact

\* *The Life of the Bee*, by Maeterlinck (G. Allen & Unwin, 1930).

that they may start for their winter home some time after the adults have left. The most remarkable instance is that of the American Golden Plover. The adults travel from Northern Canada through the eastern states and even over the sea to the Argentine. The young ones start later aiming at the same destination, but they travel directly south through the central plains and using a route that may be as much as two thousand miles distant from that used by the older birds. No explanation of this extraordinary fact has as yet been suggested if we exclude vague guesses that are a mere matter of words and that will not stand a minute's examination.\* If current views of the relation of mind and body are correct, knowledge of the routes to be followed, or something that gives rise to this knowledge, must be transmitted from one generation to the next through the germ-cells. It is very difficult to imagine how the egg can contain something that has to give rise to the equivalent of two route maps and also to imagine how it happens that the bird uses one of these maps on its first flight and the other on later occasions. The communal-mind theory offers an alternative view—namely, that the migrating bird is guided by an influence that comes to it from the past, not by way of the germ-cells, but by means of a mind that is common to the whole species. But this suggestion is open to criticism. If being "difficult to imagine" is a test of the credibility of a theory, how is one of these two theories any better than the other? One theory asks us to believe something that is difficult to imagine—namely, the equivalent of route-maps being transmitted through the egg. The other theory asks us to believe that the same hypothetical route-maps are transmitted by way of a communal mind. Is not this latter alternative equally difficult to imagine?

\* *The Riddle of Migration*, by W. Rowan (Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins Company, 1931), p. 77.

It comes to this : conclusive proof of the existence of the communal mind can be obtained only by bringing forward evidence that it has spacial extension and is present in the environment of the individual, and therefore is not merely a part of the individual mind. Evidence pointing in this direction will be brought forward in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE COMMUNAL MIND

WE have quoted the dictum of the historian Lecky that "the spirit of patriotism in its relation to other nations is a spirit of constant and jealous self-assertion." A normal civilized man may be overwhelmed by this spirit the moment he hears of an insult to the dignity of his Government or a threat to the security of his fatherland. This spirit may result in feelings having a far greater compelling force than that of any recognized instinct. Such feelings may impel him to conduct that is useless to him personally; they may cause him to risk his life or to fight with courage far greater than he is capable of in any personal quarrel. But he may be immune to feelings of this kind. The stimulus that arouses these feelings in some members of the community may affect other members slightly or not at all. Suggestion here plays a part, but it is that of the trigger rather than that of the explosive. The varying incidence of such feelings is the chief reason for disbelieving that they come to us by way of ordinary inheritance and for asserting that current views of the nature of the human mind are not sufficient to explain our conduct in political affairs. This difficulty has already been recognized. Emile Durkheim, formerly editor of *L'Année Sociologique*, has suggested that conceptions when once formed might occasionally continue to exist independently, to some extent, of the nerve-centres, and he also suggested that, in such persisting influences, an explanation might at length be obtained of many of the facts of our social life.\*

\* *Sociologie et Philosophie*, by Emile Durkheim (Felix Allan, Paris, 1924), p. 32. I am indebted to Professor McDougall for this reference.

The facts we have considered suggest an advance on Durkheim's ideas. It is to the effect that the source of our political feelings is to be found in a mind common to the whole community, a mind which we propose to designate as the communal mind.

We have seen in the last chapter that the first step in establishing the existence of the communal mind must be the proof that it exists outside the nervous system and body of the individual. Let us now put aside all thoughts of practical applications of our knowledge of the nature of national feelings and seek for this proof. We shall find it, in the first place, in the route-finding faculty shown by migrating animals, and secondly in the changes that have taken place in the course of ages in various substitutes for human sacrifice.

Let us begin with the route-finding by the migrating animal. It has been said that this is due to a directive instinct. This is little more than saying that it is guided by some means that we do not understand.

It is impossible to imagine any such thing as a sense of direction apart from impressions coming to the animal from the outside world. Sensory impressions can have a directive effect only if they influence the animal more strongly when coming from one direction than when coming from another. Consequently it is impossible to invoke ordinary sense impressions to explain migration over long distances. Over short distances an animal may be guided on its course by such impressions. These may act in unexpected ways. For example, Engelman, experimenting on a very intelligent sheep-dog, found that its remarkable power of direction-finding was lost when one of its ears was bandaged.\*

It might be suggested that the migrating animal has in its brain an equivalent of the mariner's compass or of

\* Quoted by Dr. W. S. Tucker, in an article on "Direction-Finding by Sound" in *Nature*, July 18, 1936, Supplement, p. 111.

the Sperry gyroscope. Such mechanisms, being under the influence of the earth's magnetic field or of the earth's rotation, would receive impressions coming more strongly from one direction than from another, and hence might conceivably be of use in guidance. Also such mechanisms have a quality that we must ascribe to the guiding influence in migration—namely, that they are operative over the whole distance travelled from start to finish. But any such suggestion seems to be entirely ruled out by the fact that the journey of the migrating animal may be widely different from a simple compass course. Let us consider an example.

Eels in their larval form, after being hatched at the breeding-place in deep water between the West Indies and Bermuda, have a journey lasting for three years and over a distance of from three thousand to three thousand five hundred miles before they reach the rivers of Western Europe where they assume the adult form.\* They travel at a depth of several hundred metres where no sunlight can penetrate, and hence under conditions that make it certain that any sensory impressions that come from the environment are of such a uniform nature that it is impossible to suggest seriously that they can have any directive effect.

If the influence that guides the course of the young eels does not come from outside, it must come from inside. It is impossible to take such a view seriously. It is to the effect that a mechanism is present in the brain of the larval eel that, after steering it on an easterly course for a couple of years or more, may cause a number of individuals to turn to the left and travel in a northerly direction until they reach the rivers of Iceland; it must be supposed to cause other individuals to find their way

\* See Heape, *loc. cit.*, p. 282. A series of illustrated cards with an accompanying pamphlet on the life history of the eel has been published by the British Museum (Natural History).

to the Baltic, and thence to the rivers of Northern Russia; others, following various courses, are led to the different rivers of Western Europe. Such changes of direction, made under conditions that seem to preclude the aid of any helpful sensory impressions, appear to be entirely beyond the power of any conceivable brain mechanism.

Now let us consider the evidence offered by the behaviour of migrating insects.

In the first place the behaviour of the migrating individual cannot be due to watching its neighbours. Swarms of migrating insects occur in which the distance between individuals is far greater than is likely to be bridged by any sensory communication. For instance, on two occasions migrating locusts have been observed by me in flight, all flying in the same direction, when the distance between each one and its nearest neighbour was rarely less than two hundred yards. Dr. C. B. Williams informs me that he has seen a flight of Painted Lady butterflies crossing the Mediterranean in which the individuals appeared to be usually about a mile apart from each other.

A guidance outlasting the life of the individual is indicated in those instances in which more than one generation is needed to bring the migrating insect to the limit of its range. For instance, Painted Lady butterflies, after crossing the Mediterranean from Africa, settle in Southern Europe and breed. The offspring thus produced are subject to the same impulse to migrate, and they continue their flight in much the same direction as had been followed by their parents before them.\*

From the foregoing it appears that the directive power that guides the migrating animal is something that comes to it from outside. This something must be of a mental nature, because it is directive, and also because, in the case of the larval eel, it may cause groups of

\* Williams, *loc. cit.*, p. 209.

individuals to take different courses. Such splitting up of the group is analogous to the phenomena shown in the swarming of bees that also yield evidence of the existence of the communal mind.

That the guiding power of the communal mind acts through long distances over the sea is indicated by the facts of the homing faculty of sea-frequenting birds which, flying for hundreds of miles out of sight of land, every year find their way to some small island on which they make their nests and breed. The penguins of the Antarctic offer a similar phenomenon. Living for most of the year some hundreds of miles away from any land, when the breeding season comes they travel south and go directly to their breeding-place on the Antarctic mainland. An instance of homing faculty in which any effects of inherited experience of the route is definitely excluded has been investigated by Mr. David Lack. He has carried out experiments with shearwaters and other birds that nest on the island of Skokholm off the Pembrokeshire coast. He found that these birds, when caught and taken to places from five to seven hundred miles distant from their nesting-place, when liberated, flew rapidly back to their homes.\*

These facts indicate that the communal mind has a sense of direction. To say that such sense is due to a directive instinct is no more an explanation than it is to ascribe such an instinct to the individual mind. To seek the power of guidance possessed by the communal mind in physical influences coming to it more strongly from one direction than from another is just as hopeless as is seeking such stimuli as guides for the larval eel.

Thus we are led to a conclusion to which there seems to be no alternative—namely, that the communal mind extends along the whole route of the migrating animal from start to finish, and that with sea birds who have a

\* Described in an article in *The Times* of October 10, 1936.

homing faculty it is present over the whole of the sea area that they usually frequent.

Thus the phenomena of migration afford evidence of the existence of mind apart from the body of the individual. No reason has here been brought forward for suspecting that the individual mind exists outside the nervous system of the individual. It is the communal mind that we have found to extend not only through the area in which individuals live, but also over large areas that they visit only on infrequent occasions. Extension of the communal mind over large areas may also be invoked to explain instances in which animals or insects form migrating swarms simultaneously in widely separated parts of their range. For instance, it has been shown by Elton that in years in which lemmings migrate in Norway they behave in the same way in Greenland and Canada.\* A striking instance of simultaneous migrations of Painted Lady butterflies in Europe and California is related by Williams.†

The conclusion to which we have been led as to the spacial extension of the communal mind appears to deserve the attention of students of telepathy.

Let us now consider evidence of the existence of a communal mind that is offered by the mode of transmission of persistent customs.

We have seen that such customs are maintained owing to desires that do not develop in the consciousness of individuals, either as a product of conscious reasoning or owing to wish to conform to custom or as any result of the influence of tradition. These desires appear, in some unexplained way, to come from the past. One reason for refusing to believe that they are a result of tradition is the liability of such desires to change into or to give rise to counterpart customs, as was explained in Chapter I. In

\* *Animal Ecology*, by C. Elton (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1927), p. 134.

† *Migration of Butterflies*, by C. B. Williams (Oliver & Boyd, 1930), p. 409.

Chapters I, II, and VII, much evidence was brought forward proving that these desires have persisted long after any reason for their origin had been forgotten. This we found was especially the case with substitutes for human sacrifice. For instance, with foundation-sacrifices the original reason for them was to furnish a guardian spirit. When this had been forgotten, such sacrifices were continued, at first under the belief that a life was required. As in the course of time the desire for such sacrifice waned still further, the idea of a sacrifice of life fell into abeyance, and it was supposed that burying a bone or even a measurement of a man's shadow was sufficient.

Though reason played no part in producing these desires in the minds of persons addicted to these customs, reason no doubt played its part in the minds of their ancestors when persistent customs first began. Since then reason has also played a part in determining the means by which the desires in question should be indulged. A remarkable instance of a ceremony having been designed with the object of indulging such a desire was described in Chapter IX in connection with the substitute for the king-killing custom that once existed at Calicut in Southern India. This ceremony, and also the substitute customs for human sacrifice cannot be explained as being due to a desire to conform to established usage, for all these substitute ceremonies, when first introduced, involved a disregard of custom. It is difficult to consider these desires as being of an innate nature, for, in many instances, they affect only a small proportion of the population. It is impossible to regard them as being produced to subserve the needs of any particular organ, for the desires in question are usually of no direct use either to the individual or to his community.

These desires cannot be a product of any arrangement of molecules or of their movements or vibrations. Neither can they be due to such forms of radiant energy as are

dealt with by the physicist. Unlike such material agents, they are not brought to an end by an obstruction. With purposive striving, they find means to get round it; they persist in thus trying until they achieve their aim. Such desires are therefore mental in nature. They are part of a mind. Their existence is a proof that there is a mind independent of the mind belonging to each individual and apparently also that come to the developing individual from its environment. It is the source of these desires that we propose to designate as the communal mind.

It might be objected that the idea that the phenomena of migration are caused by a communal mind involves ascribing to this hypothetical agent qualities and powers verging on the incredible. This objection has but little value. Experience of mind apart from the nervous system is wanting. We have no knowledge of any kind as to what in relation to it is credible or probable or the reverse.

It is possible that with some of the lower animals the communal mind plays a more important part and the individual mind a less important part than is the case with man. Consider for instance the larval eel journeying across the Atlantic. If its movement is due to a communal mind, the idea that each larva has an individual mind is an unnecessary hypothesis. The individual mind, if it existed, would have nothing to do. The larval eel makes no attempt to avoid enemies or to seek for food. Its nourishment appears to be derived from organic matter absorbed from the surrounding water without any effort of the individual. It has no sensory impressions to attend to or that could affect its conduct. Hence it is likely that the larval eel acquires an individual mind only when its migration is finished and when, on reaching the rivers of Europe, it has to begin its individual existence.

Some years ago I happened to notice, while crossing the Arabian Sea, an apparent migration of jelly-fishes. During



the whole day the steamer was passing through a shoal of these creatures. The distance from each individual to the next was usually from one to three hundred yards. They were all tilted over on their sides and showing slow pulsations of their bodies. The movement was always in the same direction. On another day I noted that the jelly-fishes, if moving at all, were doing so in all directions. The possibility is not completely excluded that the movement, when all were moving in the same direction, was due to a surface current caused by a wind too light to cause ripples but that was yet sufficiently strong to cause such a current and thereby to tilt the animals over. It is highly improbable that a wind of so uniform a strength existed over so large an area. Thus it is more likely than not that the observed movement was a migration, and, if so, due to an impulse coming from the communal mind of the species. If it is admitted that the behaviour of the jelly-fish is controlled by a communal mind, the hypothesis that it also has an individual mind seems to be unnecessary.

Thus we are brought face to face with the probability that the mind of the individual is derived from, or budded off from, the communal mind of the species. Whether or not it is destined to be absorbed into the communal mind on the death of the individual must be left an open question. The idea that it may do so is not new, for, according to an ancient Indian philosophy, the soul is destined at length to be reabsorbed into the deity, just as the water in a drop of rain inevitably returns to the ocean from which it came.\*

Several psychologists have made suggestions of various kinds as to the existence of some kind of collective consciousness. Their conclusions, however, have not been based on any such definite evidence as has been brought forward in the preceding pages. Professor McDougall appears to have been the first to give a clear account of what may

\* *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, by J. W. Draper (London, 1864), Vol. I, p. 56.

be implied by such an hypothesis.\* He describes the conception as "an hypothesis to be kept in reserve until the study of group life reveals phenomena that cannot be explained without its aid." He says also that there is no possibility of such evidence being obtained until "the principles of social psychology have been applied far more thoroughly than has yet been done to the explanation of the course of history," and also that the hypothesis would be permissible if it could be shown that "great mass movements, emigrations, religious or political uprisings, and so forth" do occur for which no adequate explanation is to be found in the mental processes of individuals. The difficulty in finding such evidence is due to the complicatedness of human social life and to the frequent intervention of reason in directing its activities. As we have seen, some evidence has been obtained from the study of persistent customs and of political enthusiasms, but more evidence is derived from the study of mass emigrations and the behaviour of social animals. Yet it is remarkable how far the evidence for the communal mind brought forward in this book justifies Professor McDougall's foresight.

\* *The Group Mind*, by Professor W. McDougall (Cambridge University Press, 2nd Ed., 1927), p. 33.



## INDEX

- ALBOIN, 68  
 Alliances, 164  
 American Civil War, 140  
 Anti-imperialism, 2  
 Anti-patriotism, 2  
 Armed forces and national security, 163  
 Atkinson and Lang's "Primal Law," 25
- BABYLON, annual temporary deposition of king, 118  
 Berserkers, 16, 62, 112  
 Biting in combat, 15, 16  
 Blood brotherhood, 38  
   — covenant, 39  
   — drinking, 15  
   — as expression of grief, 6, 36  
   — as gesture of hatred, 27  
   — distribution of, 35  
   — falling on ground, dislike of, 37  
   — feud, 28  
   — frenzy, 16, 32, 33  
   — painting body or face with, 31, 62  
 Blood-thirsty, 33  
 Boniface, Saint, 30, 96  
 Bridget, Saint, 65
- CANNIBAL frenzy, 108, 170  
 Cannibalism as expression of grief, 7  
   — as gesture of hatred, 15, 52  
   — dislike of, 42, 113  
   — in Europe, 20, 50, 51  
   — restricted, 11, 44, 109  
   — shame at recollection of, 47  
   — theories of, 5  
 Celebes, 111  
 Ceremonies, possible uses of, 166  
 Chinese delegates at Amsterdam Congress, 144  
 Christianity and human sacrifice, 94
- Cleveland, President, 145  
 Columba, Saint, 102  
 Communal mind, 183  
   — and political feelings, 186  
   — as source of desires, 192  
   — for guidance of migrating animals, 190  
   — idea of, in ancient Indian philosophy, 194  
 Counterpart customs, 1, 6, 18, 19  
 Cremation, 20  
 Cromer, Lord, on inter-racial dislike, 129  
 Cruelty in human sacrifice, 18  
   — to enemies, 17, 77  
 Customs, persistent, 2
- DANISH prisoners flayed, 77  
 Desires and persistent customs, 181, 192  
 Dionysus, 105  
 Directive faculty of the migrating animal, 187  
 Disarmament, 154  
   — objections to, 160, 168  
 Discontinuous frontiers, 168  
 Drinking from skulls of enemies, 3, 68  
   — from skulls of saints, 3, 75
- EELS on migration, 188  
 Ely, foundation sacrifice in, 92  
 Emigration, 179
- FLAYING of prisoners, 77, 81  
 Football, 66, 171  
 Forgetting reasons for persistent customs, 192  
 Foundation sacrifices, 91  
 Frazer, Sir J. G., on blood frenzy, 16, 33  
 Frenzied excitement, 4, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 43, 62, 115  
   — in human sacrifice, 18  
   — fighting, 105

Frenzy and nationalism, 151  
 — cannibal, 105, 111, 170  
 Funeral feasts, 8, 46, 58

GENGHIS KHAN, 82

Germans and Nibelungen mentality, 152

Gewelib, Bishop, engaged in blood feud, 29

Gibbon, 69

Gortigern, 91

HARTLAND, 8, 44, 46, 59

Head-hunting, 67

— — — and courtship, 73

— — — frenzied excitement in, 74

Heads as motives in decoration, 76

Heape, 179

Hearts of enemies eaten, 56, 63

Hitler, 162

Human sacrifice, foundation, 9

— — — in Europe, records of, 95

— — — substitutes for, 9

Hyndman, 128

INDIAN Native Princes, 167

Individual mind derived from communal mind, 194

Inferiority complex affecting judgment, 136

Internationalism, 167

Ireland, in time of Henry VIII, 65

Ireland, secession of, 143

JAMESON RAID, 143

Jung, 128

KAISER, 143

Kali, Hindu goddess, 31

King-killing custom, substitutes for, 112

— — — waning of, 118

LEAGUE OF NATIONS, 164

Lecky, historian, 150

Lemmings, 181

MACDONALD, Ramsay, 134

McDougall, 194

Maeterlinck, 183

Malabar, 121

Maori, 21, 65

Migration, 179

Militarism without war, 177

Mock human sacrifices, 9

Moriore, 172

Munro, Sir Thomas, 135

Murder, decoration awarded for, 161

NATIONAL dignity, 167

— — — feeling, 133

— — — origin of, 149

— — — honour, 151, 164

— — — security, sense of, 159, 162, 168

— — — self-assertion, 150, 157

— — — self-respect, 133, 137, 155

— — — symbols, 167

Nationalism, 134, 140

Nibelungen mentality, 164, 169, 165

Niebelungenlied, 151

ORAN, 102

Osiris, 108

PACIFISM followed by racial degeneration, 172

"Pacifism" without peace, 177

Pageantry, 163

Painted Lady butterflies, migrating, 181, 189

Patriotism, 132

Peace, possible ill effects of, 171

Persistent customs, 2

— — — and inheritance, 179

— — — in animals, 178

— — — maintenance of, 24

— — — recent origin of, 14

— — — source of, 12

— — — modes of thought, 126

Pindari, 83

Property, desire for, 15

Pseudo-instinct, 91

RACE prejudice, 129

Reason and persistent custom, 192

Religion, 18, 108

Resentment at criticism of armed strength, 165

SACRIFICE, mock, 100

— — — of firstborn, 97

— — — of widows, 88

— — — on bursting of a dam, 90

Scalping, 39, 80

Self-respect, national, 137

— — — personal, 135

Shivaji, 83

"Skal," 69

- Skulls of enemies as drinking-cups, 68
- of saints as drinking-cups, 75
- Smile, 19
- Snobbishness, 136
- Springbuck, 179
- Stranger-hating instinct, 129
- Substitute customs, 192
- Suggestion, 5, 11, 114, 133
- Survivals of human sacrifice, 99
- TACULLIES, 88
- Teeth used in combat, 15, 16
- Telepathy, 191
- Thouless, Dr. R. H., 155.
- Tooth mutilation, 6
- Torture, 17, 77
- Tribal territory, affection for, 149
- VALERIAN, 84
- Venezuela, 145
- Versailles Peace Conference, 139
- WALLAS, Professor Graham, 171
- War, 64
- evolution of, 176
- , private, 64
- Wells, H. G., 132
- Wille, Max, in blood feud, 29
- Williams, C. B., 189

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